Poland's Jewish Problem JAROSLAW ANDERS, LEON WIESELTIER

THE NEW REPUBLIC

Jason Zengerle on John Edwards

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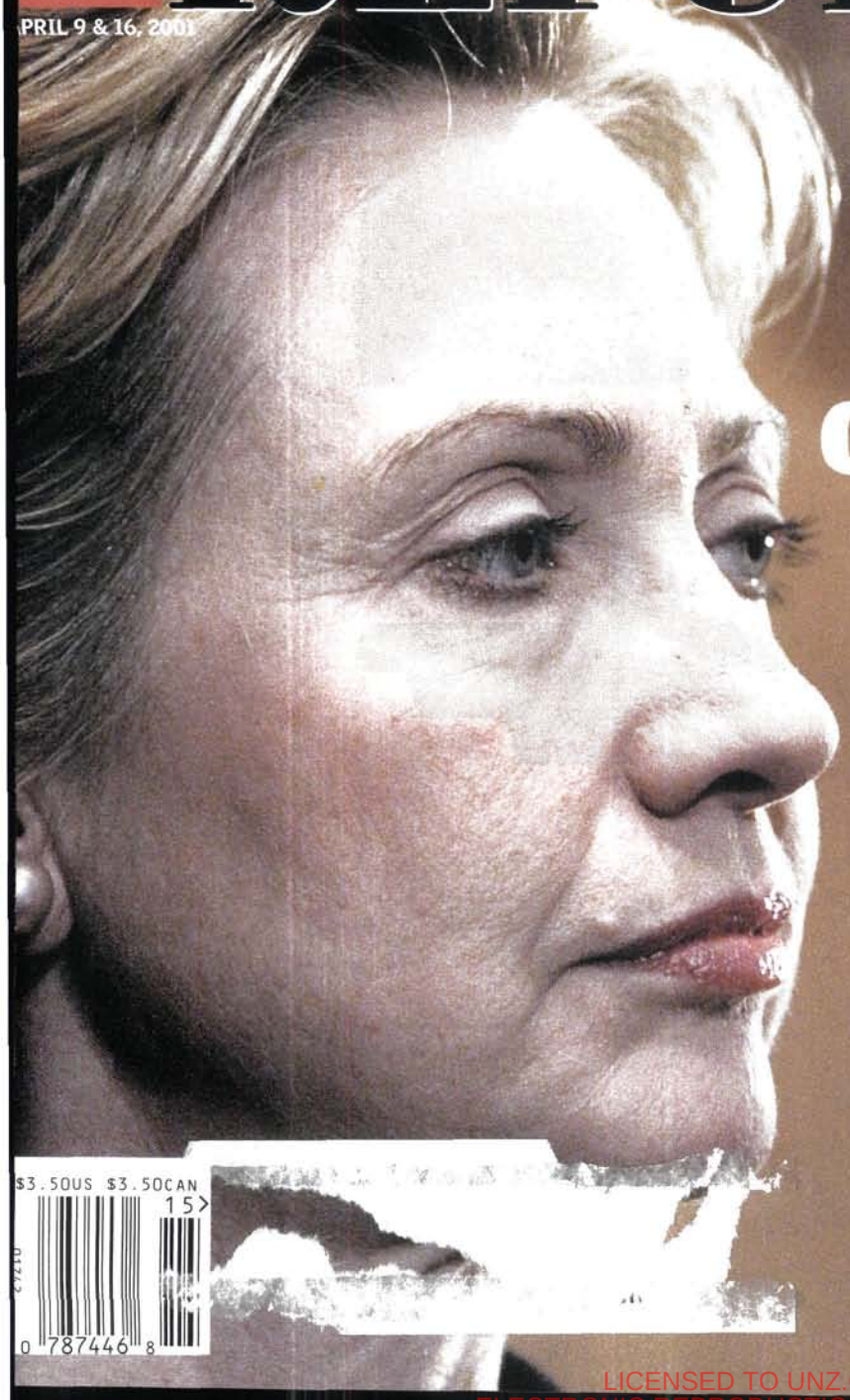
APRIL 9 & 16, 2001



The Banality of Senator Clinton

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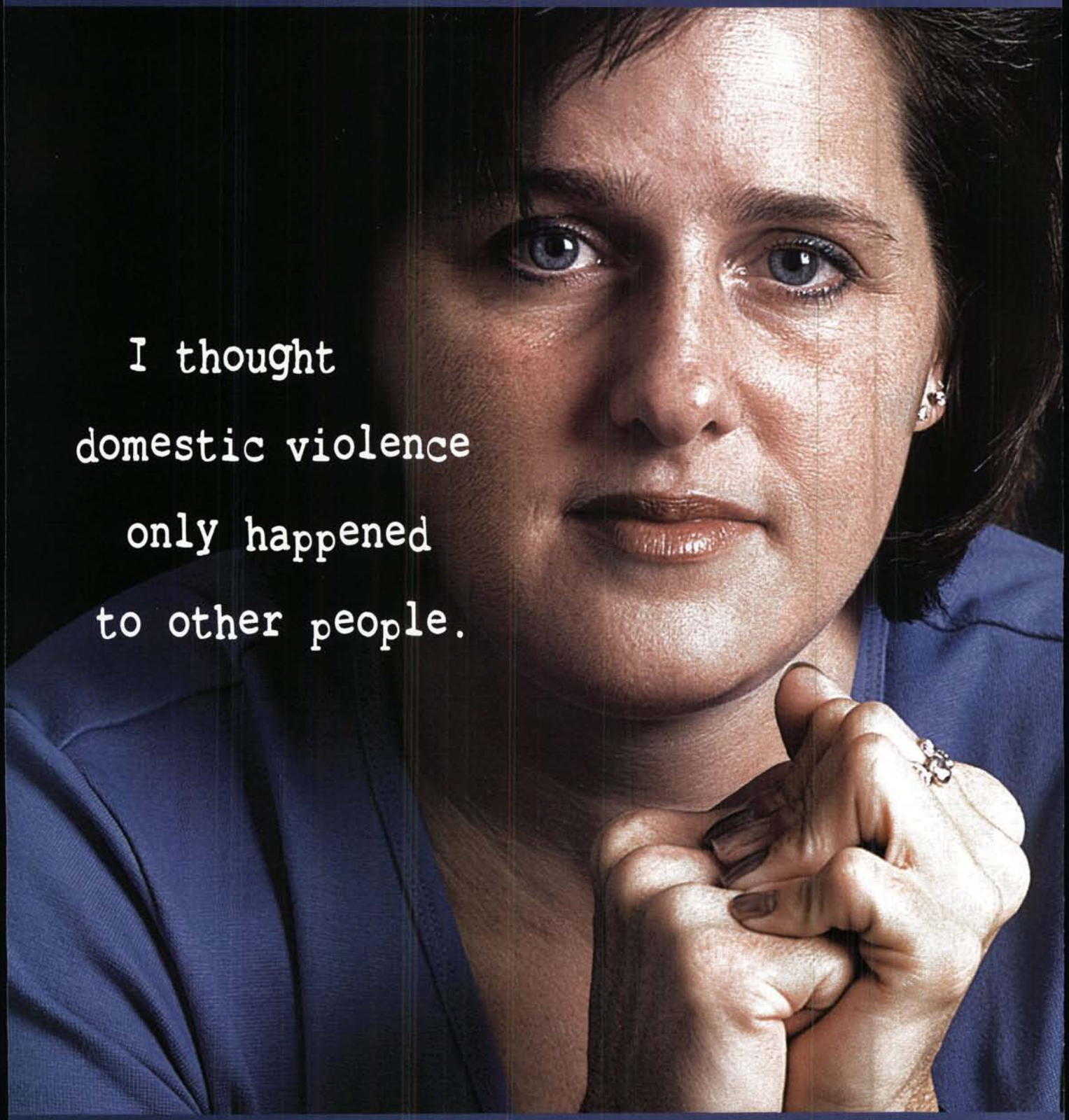

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Where We Stand

A commentary on public education and other critical issues

Everyone Wins

By SANDRA FELDMAN, President
American Federation of Teachers

One of the many fallacies spouted by opponents of teachers' unions is that unions are obstacles to improving education. This suggests that when teachers win, students lose. But to say that the interests of students and teachers are in conflict defies simple logic. Anyone who has visited a classroom understands that teachers and students work toward the same goal. Happily, the release of a significant new study confirms this commonsense understanding of shared interests.

Published in the latest issue of the *Harvard Educational Review*, the study ("Do Teacher Unions Hinder Educational Performance?") documents a state-by-state comparison of student achievement on the two standard college entrance exams, the SAT and the ACT. It found that the average scores in states that are heavily unionized are more than 50 points higher on the SAT exam than the scores from non-unionized states. And the results on the ACT are comparable.

These tests are not the only measures of student aptitude and knowledge that could have been used, of course, but they do offer some obvious advantages. First, since high school students all over the country who hope to go to college take at least one of these exams, researchers can use the scores to make nationwide comparisons. Second, since these tests are ones that students themselves see as vitally important to their futures, the results reflect what students can do when they are most highly motivated to succeed. (While there's a growing debate over standardized college admissions tests, the issues involved have no bearing on the new study's findings.)

Findings based on hard data

Researchers Lala Carr Steelman, Brian Powell, and Robert M. Carini were careful to avoid pitfalls that might bias their findings. Unlike previous researchers who have explored this subject, for example, they controlled for the number and types of students taking the tests in various states and for other critical factors such as parental education, family income, race, and gender. But no matter what factors the three researchers added to the mix, students in states where teachers were strongly unionized scored significantly higher.

The study's authors cite a number of educational factors positively associated with teachers' unions that may account for the higher test scores in unionized states. Among the factors are "better working conditions; greater worker autonomy, security, and dignity; improved administration; better training of teachers; and greater levels of faculty professionalism." These factors would make a positive difference for students as well. In other words, the "benefits" that teachers' unions have struggled to achieve are beneficial for kids, too.

New study finds gains made by teachers' unions benefit kids, too.

That's why the suggestion that, if teachers win, kids lose, is both silly and cynical. Why would people who devote themselves to helping young people learn want to push for policies that would be detrimental to their life's work? Likewise, it follows that those measures that attract and keep good teachers and help them do a better job also help their students.

More professionals joining unions

The *Harvard Review* article reaffirms what many educators and others have long known—unions mean quality for everyone involved. That's why so many other professionals, including nurses, doctors, and psychologists, increasingly are joining unions—because unions help them improve the quality of their work.

Too often, in calling for commonsense reforms in education, teachers have been criticized as self-serving. For years teachers' unions have asserted that smaller class size makes a critical difference in learning—and they were accused of simply wanting to make teachers' jobs easier. Today, of course, almost no one disputes the rock-solid research that supports the commonsense argument that teachers can teach better, and students can learn more, in smaller classes.

An equally logical conclusion flows from the findings of this important new study—when unionized teachers achieve better conditions, it means their students get a better education. For the sake of our children and their future, let's hope it doesn't take too long to convince the skeptics about this truth. ∎

Where We Stand **is published once every month in *The New Republic*. To comment, write to Sandra Feldman, AFT, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001.** **© Sandra Feldman 2001.** **Visit our web site (http://www.aft.org).**

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts

WASHINGTON, D.C.
APRIL 9 & 16, 2001
ISSUES 4,499 & 4,500

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Back Issues and Reception
MONICA BROWN

6 **CORRESPONDENCE** Should parents hug and kiss their children? &c.

8 **ANDREW SULLIVAN** TRB: KILLING FIELDS Why is Britain slaughtering its animals?

11 **THE EDITORS** LESSON PLAN Why Macedonia isn't Kosovo. And why it needs our help.

12 **NOTEBOOK** Murdoch family values, &c.

14 **PETER BEINART** GREEN MONSTER Why McCain-Feingold will help the Democrats.

16 **MICHAEL CROWLEY** ON THE HILL: DULL AND DULLER Hillary's new identity: boring.

17 **MICHELLE COTTLE** ONLY A TEST The Bush education plan falls apart.

20 **MARTIN PERETZ** ENEMIES, A LOVE STORY The Bushies and Israel: a pleasant surprise.

23 **LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN** FANTASY ISLAND Bushies versus bad guys on Taiwan.

24 **JEFFREY ROSEN** FEDERAL OFFENSE The Court's assault on anti-discrimination.

26 **JASON ZENGERLE** SOUTH CENTRAL Why is North Carolina Senator John Edwards, who has been in politics less than three years, a leading Democratic presidential contender? It's not because he says anything special. He just says it Southern.

30 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: OUT TO KILL *Enemy at the Gates* and *Memento* look back in superficiality.

32 **ROBERT BRUSTEIN** ON THEATER: THE AESTHETICS OF VIOLENCE Edward Bond's *Saved* shows that some things can still shock; *A Skull in Connemara* and *Ten Unknowns* are less gruesome, and less compelling.

36 **JAROSLAW ANDERS** THE MURDER OF MEMORY *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* by Jan T. Gross

42 **JOYCE CAROL OATES** POEM *The Cruel Touch*

43 **JAMES WOOD** INVISIBLE MAN *Romancing: The Life and Work of Henry Green* by Jeremy Treglown

50 **MICHAEL GRUNWALD** THE FIGURE IN THE CARPETBAGGER *Hillary's Turn: Inside Her Improbable, Victorious Senate Campaign* by Michael Tomasky

57 **G.W. BOWERSOCK** SIGN LANGUAGE *Gesture in Naples and Gesture in Classical Antiquity* by Andrea de Jorio

62 **LEON WIESELTIER** WASHINGTON DIARIST: RIGHTEOUS

On the Cover : Photo by RICARDO WATSON/UPI
On the Web : www.thenewrepublic.com

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 224, Numbers 15 & 16, Issues 4,499 & 4,500, April 9 & 16, 2001. (Printed in the United States on March 28, 2001.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated January 1 & 8, April 9 & 16, July 9 & 16, August 27 & September 3, 2001 and December 31, 2001 & January 7, 2002) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. For advertising inquiries, please contact Ann Rossaki at (202) 331-7494 or our NY sales office at (212) 924-8700. Yearly subscriptions, $59.94; foreign, $99.94 (U.S. funds); Canada, $79.94 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $4.00 (includes postage & handling). **© 2001 by The New Republic, Inc.** **(ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 331-0275. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue, and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (e-mail address: tnr@aol.com). For subscription inquiries or problems call 1-800-827-1289 or visit our website at www.thenewrepublic.com.**

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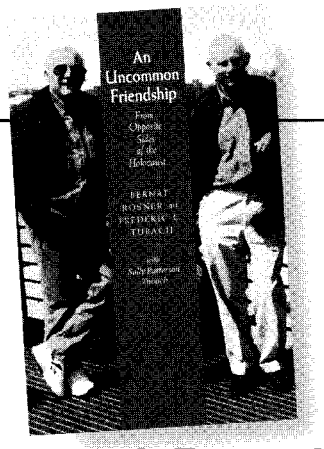

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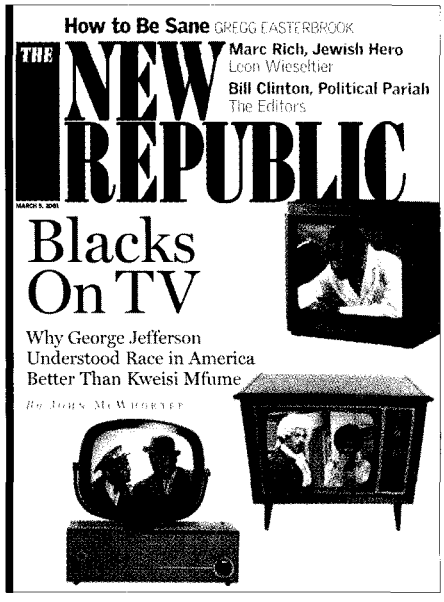
First principles

To the editors:
Noam Scheiber ridicules the labor movement for opposing several provisions of the McCain-Feingold bill because they endanger the bill's soft money ban and labor's supposedly greater influence in the Democratic Party if the bill is enacted ("Futile Labor," March 12). These provisions, regulating so-called coordination between groups and candidates and censoring a wide scope of broadcast messages sponsored by unions or corporations, are extreme and oppressive. The suggestion that the AFL-CIO should meekly agree to resort to the courts to salvage our ability to participate in political and legislative processes and engage in public advocacy echoes those who treat any questioning of this bill as heresy. I thought The New Republic prided itself on its aversion to political correctness. The AFL-CIO's support of a ban on soft money contributions to the national parties is consistent and long-standing, and it arises from our view that the parties should rely on grassroots support, not corporate underwriting. We are not motivated by some foolish and Pyrrhic hope that such a ban would cause the Democratic Party to "collapse" and become a dependent of the labor movement. I wonder how TNR would react if this bill contained a provision clamping down on the ability of news outlets to communicate with officeholders, candidates, and the public. Please don't ask us to surrender our First Amendment rights, either.

Laurence E. Gold
Associate General Counsel
AFL-CIO
Washington, D.C.

They're OK

To the editors:
Gregg Easterbrook ("I'm OK, You're OK," March 5) claims that the pessimism and mechanism of behaviorism and Freudian theory must yield to a view of the mind based on human well-being. He's not the first to make this claim. These critiques had started by 1951, and they mostly prevailed long ago. Also, Easterbrook's criticism of behaviorism is marked by the straw men that have been set up and knocked down so many times over the decades. John Watson is a tempting target because he sometimes said things [that parents should "never hug and kiss" their children, for instance] that seemed outrageous, especially when taken out of



context, but these outbursts are not representative of behaviorism. B. F. Skinner, who is much more influential than Watson, advocated the ample use of affection as a reinforcer in child-rearing. This might be analogous to the behavior of "lab rats in a meaningless maze," but it isn't the same thing, not even according to a behaviorist. Some might even call it good sense.

Adam Goodie
Assistant Professor of Psychology
University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia

Poor choice

To the editors:
The line "Marc Rich, Jewish Hero" on the cover of the March 5 issue is grossly misleading. By closely examining the magazine, one finally deduces that it refers to Leon Wieseltier's "If I Were a Rich Man." This thoughtful article by no means implies that Rich is a Jewish hero. If the cover line was meant to convey sarcasm, the words were poorly chosen.

Irving Heymont
Fort Belvoir, Virginia

Intimate grammar

To the editors:
Is it fair to hold students to higher standards when the president of the United States says things like "he or her will be able to pass a literacy test" ("The Case for Universal Testing," March 5)? That George W. Bush's verbal incapacity was showcased in a speech about education is all the more galling. Grammargate lives!

David Rabinovitz
Brooklyn, New York

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Unexamined

To the editors:

In his review of Andrew Stark's book *Conflict of Interest in American Public Life* ("Ethicism," March 5), Peter Berkowitz claims that professors who study professional ethics "have left their own profession's ethics virtually unexamined." For the record, academic ethics is the subject of my work *Saints and Scamps: Ethics in Academia* and of a series of books I have edited, "Studies in Academic Ethics." Berkowitz is correct that "academic life generates an abundance of ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest." I assure him these are receiving serious attention.

Steven M. Cahn
Professor of Philosophy
City University of New York
Graduate Center
New York, New York

Fallible law

To the editors:

G. Edward White's review of Albert Alschuler's *Law Without Values: The Life, Work, and Legacy of Justice Holmes* adds to a recent negative turn in assessments of the career of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes ("The Bench of Anxiety," February 19). Emphasizing his ambition and personal foibles along with a vague and troubling charge of "Darwinism" as his philosophy, both eminent scholars minimize the grounds on which Holmes painstakingly built his attitude toward judicial restraint in constitutional law.

Insofar as Alschuler's "law without values" characterization is fair, I would respond that it is rooted in a recognition of deliberative and democratic aspects of legal growth, and its effect is to permit values, whether within or without the "law," to emerge from society, not from dictation by judges. Holmes's restraint in constitutional cases resisted the notion that judges should automatically accept the broad jurisdiction for decision-making that increasingly falls upon them under "fundamental law," lest local, popular, private participation in and responsibility over resolving controversial questions diminish.

Holmes is better described as a fallibilist than a Darwinist. Fallibilism, the attitude that no formulation of any principle can be comprehensively final, originated in the 1870s as a reference to the inherent elements of uncertainty and ambiguity in forming and translating public consensus through language. It is opposed to a legalism that Holmes sought to dislodge in his dissent in *Lochner* v. *New York*—the assumption that when rights conflict, judges can decide which right should triumph without having to rely on controversial moral views. Holmes developed this important insight as a young scholar, and, while it appears throughout his later writing, it is ignored or misinterpreted by too many Holmes scholars.

Frederic R. Kellogg
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Department of Philosophy
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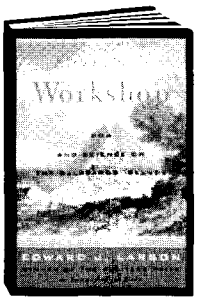

Evolution's Workshop
God and Science on the Galapagos Islands
by Edward J. Larson

Pulitzer Prize winning author Edward Larson chronicles Charles Darwin's explorations, the fabulous Gilded Age Expeditions of the legendary Galapagos Islands that featured rough-and-ready science by day and black-tie dinners by night. Larson delineates many enthralling stories of evolutionary science, including the struggle for control of research on the scientifically-invaluable, desolate lands of the Galapagos, where the laws of evolution and natural selection remained virtually untainted.

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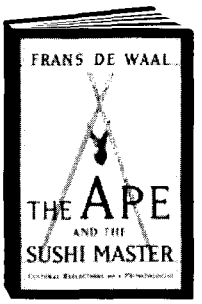

The Ape and the Sushi Master
Cultural Reflections of a Primatologist
by Frans de Waal

Leading primate behavior expert Frans de Waal challenges popular anthropocentric opinions about human and animal behavior in his controversial new book, *The Ape and the Sushi Master*. Writing with a compelling mix of anecdotes, rigorous research, and fascinating speculation, he refutes the commonly held notions that animals are apolitical and culturally defunct by illustrating how remarkably similar the social behavior of apes is to that of humans.

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Killing Fields

THE IMAGES ARE indelible. Bucolic rural scenes on the verge of spring are dotted with pyres of spiraling smoke. Normal life has been all but suspended. Troops prepare to patrol the area. Mass killings predominate. No, this is not Srebrenica; it's Shropshire. And, no, this isn't in any way comparable to the Balkan nightmare, but it is horrifying nonetheless. As you read this, more and more animals are being herded into pens or fields and shot dead in the head, their carcasses tossed into mass graves or burned on huge, odoriferous pyres. Some of this is done with a degree of humaneness; at least it is no less humane than the usual fate of these beasts. But in the mass killings—literally hundreds of thousands, and potentially millions, of farm animals are being slaughtered—there is also chaos and cruelty. Chris Laurence, the chief veterinary officer of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, says he has received hundreds of "disturbing reports" of panicked, incompetent killings. "We have received reports of terrified cattle being chased to one end of a barn to be shot with rifles with animals clambering over one another in their panic," he told *The Daily Telegraph* last week. One cow managed to drag itself across a barn floor a day after it supposedly had been killed.

All of which poses a simple question: Why are these hundreds of thousands of animals being slaughtered? At first I thought it was an emergency measure to contain a disease that could kill animals and threaten human health. But foot-and-mouth disease is not fatal in animals, although it can kill weak offspring. Most cows survive it and are well again within a few weeks. Nor is it even remotely dangerous to humans. The meat of these cows is perfectly edible and poses no threat to those who eat it. The only problem with foot-and-mouth disease is that it weakens the infected animals for a period of time, lowers their milk production and weight somewhat, and, because there are international bans on exports from infected regions and countries, prevents their sale for exportation. That's it. This isn't cholera or mad cow disease or HIV. It's a cow flu with cold sores.

But, at the moment, Tony Blair's government is planning to kill not merely thousands of infected animals but many thousands more healthy livestock as well, in order to create a buffer zone around the infected areas. The last time an outbreak of this kind occurred, in 1967, a similar government strategy led to 400,000 slaughtered animals—infected and uninfected. This time around, nearly half a million have already been killed, and hundreds of thousands more are being marked for slaughter. Most of these animals do not even have the virus. They're just being culled to create a firewall around those that do.

To add insult to injury, there's also a vaccine! Britain has plentiful supplies of it, and there's much more in continental Europe. The British government could vaccinate all the livestock in the entire country within a short period of time and save all these animals' lives if it wanted to, and this week the alternately hapless and pompous Blair government began contemplating this as a last resort. The only reason vaccination has not been considered so far is that it would officially take Britain off the foot-and-mouth-free list of countries with meat available for export. It's hard to determine the difference between foot-and-mouth-infected cattle and vaccinated cattle from blood tests, and so importers have routinely blocked any meat that tests positive for antibodies. For Britain, that's worth close to $900 million a year in exports. As an international regulatory scheme, that makes some sense. But it's not beyond science's potential to find a test that could distinguish between infected and vaccinated animals—and some scientists say such a test is already feasible. And, even if exports were banned for a period, the disease could eventually be contained by vaccination until it died out. Because vaccinated animals can still carry the highly infectious virus, there wouldn't be a cure overnight. But it is surely preferable to the slaughter of possibly millions of animals, even healthy ones, that is now being actively considered.

In all of this, what is remarkable so far is that virtually no account has been taken of the legitimate welfare of the animals themselves. With human epidemics, the worst we usually contemplate is selective quarantining in cases of highly infectious diseases. From a purely utilitarian viewpoint, mass killings of infected people and their neighbors might actually work as a policy of disease containment. But it is, of course, unthinkable—and, even in ancient and medieval times, when disease was far more common and scarier than today, that response was unknown. It's unthinkable because we take into account the dignity and welfare of the infected as well as the uninfected. We don't burn the village to save it. So why do we blithely murder the herds to rescue them?

Cows are not humans, of course. Very few of those now being slaughtered would even exist were it not for our intent to kill and eat them eventually. But are they so far removed from humans that a literal bloodbath for purely economic reasons can be contemplated with virtually no dissent? You don't have to buy all Peter Singer's arguments about the continuum between humans and animals to acknowledge that, in certain critical respects, we have things in common. There is little doubt, for example, that animals feel fear, terror, and pain. Quite how and why they feel these things is unknowable—but increasingly science is showing that the brain structure of animals in these respects is not unrecognizable from our own more basic brain functions. Although I don't see animal rights as comparable to human rights, that difference only makes the case for animal welfare all the more vital. Treating any one of God's creatures solely as an object to be used for economic gain is, to my mind, morally wrong. It's an abdication of the responsibility that comes with hegemony. Good farmers have always recognized this, which is why many of them in Britain have started actively resisting the government's calls for even more killing.

With any luck, they will succeed. There is surely something deeply wrong in a culture that can witness these scenes of mass slaughter without searching for every possible alternative solution first. Like easy tolerance of mass abortion and the death penalty, it is morally coarsening. If the British, a people more emotionally besotted with animals than most, can blithely accept this response to foot-and-mouth disease, then our loss of a moral compass may be more profound than we have yet realized. I am not a vegetarian, although I'm finding my carnivorous habits harder and harder to defend. But you don't have to be a vegetarian to see the moral issue here. Our proper relationship with this earth and its creatures should not be one of simple exploitation. It should be one of guardianship. Why did it take a pointless animal holocaust to make us contemplate that more seriously?

ANDREW SULLIVAN

ANDREW SULLIVAN writes daily for *www.andrewsullivan.com.*

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Annual Causes of Deaths in the US

Tobacco: 430,700[1]

1. Average 1990-1994. *Source:* "Smoking-Attributable Mortality and Years of Potential Life Lost," Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control, 1997), May 23, 1997, Vol. 46, No. 20, p. 449.

Alcohol: 110,640[2]

2. 1996. *Source:* "Number of deaths and age-adjusted death rates per 100,000 population for categories of alcohol-related (A-R) mortality, United States and States, 1979-96," National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, from the web at http://silk.nih.gov/silk/niaaa1/database/armort01.txt, last accessed Feb. 12, 2001, citing Alcohol Epidemiologic Data System, Saadatmand, F, Stinson, FS, Grant, BF, and Dufour, MC, "Surveillance Report #52: Liver Cirrhosis Mortality in the United States, 1970-96" (Rockville, MD: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Division of Biometry and Epidemiology, December 1999).

Adverse Reactions to Prescription Drugs: 32,000[3]

3. Average 1982-1998. *Source:* Lazarou, J, Pomeranz, BH, Corey, PN, "Incidence of adverse drug reactions in hospitalized patients: a meta-analysis of prospective studies," *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Chicago, IL: American Medical Association, 1998), 1998;279:1200-1205, also letters column, "Adverse Drug Reactions in Hospitalized Patients,", JAMA (Chicago, IL: AMA, 1998), Nov. 25, 1998, Vol. 280, No. 20, from the web at http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v280n20/full/jlt1125-1.html, last accessed Feb. 12, 2001.

Suicide: 30,575[4]

4. 1998. *Source:* Murphy, Sheila L., "Deaths: Final Data for 1998," National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 48, No. 11 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, July 24, 2000), Table 10, p. 53.

Homicide: 18,272[5]

5. 1998. *Source:* Murphy, Sheila L., "Deaths: Final Data for 1998," National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 48, No. 11 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, July 24, 2000), Table 10, p. 53.

All Licit & Illicit Drug-Induced Deaths: 16,926[6]

6. 1998. *Source:* Murphy, Sheila L., "Deaths: Final Data for 1998," National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 48, No. 11 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, July 24, 2000), pp. 1, 10.

Anti-Inflammatory Drugs such as Aspirin: 7,600[7]

7. 1992. *Source:* Robyn Tamblyn, PhD; Laeora Berkson, MD, MHPE, FRCPC; W. Dale Dauphinee, MD, FRCPC; David Gayton, MD, PhD, FRCPC; Roland Grad, MD, MSc; Allen Huang, MD, FRCPC; Lisa Isaac, PhD; Peter McLeod, MD, FRCPC; and Linda Snell, MD, MHPE, FRCPC, "Unnecessary Prescribing of NSAIDs and the Management of NSAID-Related Gastropathy in Medical Practice," *Annals of Internal Medicine* (Washington, DC: American College of Physicians, 1997), September 15, 1997, 127:429-438, from the web at http://www.acponline.org/journals/annals/15sep97/nsaid.htm , last accessed Feb. 14, 2001, citing Fries, JF, "Assessing and understanding patient risk," *Scandinavian Journal of Rheumatology Supplement,* 1992;92:21-4.

Marijuana: 0[8]

8. ?-Present. *Sources:* Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), available on the web at http://www.samhsa.gov/; also see Janet E. Joy, Stanley J. Watson, Jr., and John A Benson, Jr., Marijuana and Medicine: Assessing the Science Base. Division of Neuroscience and Behavioral Research, Institute of Medicine (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1999, available on the web at http://www.nap.edu/html/marimed/; and US Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration, "In the Matter of Marijuana Rescheduling Petition" (Docket #86-22), September 6, 1988, p. 57.

Common Sense for Drug Policy, Kevin B. Zeese, President, 3220 N Street NW #141, Washington, DC 20007
(703) 354-9050 * fax (703) 354-5695 * info@csdp.org * www.csdp.org * www.drugwarfacts.org

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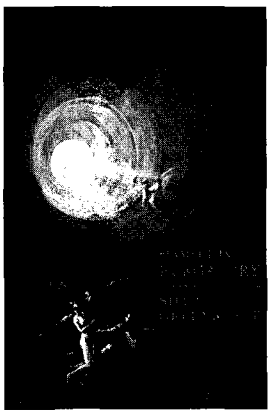

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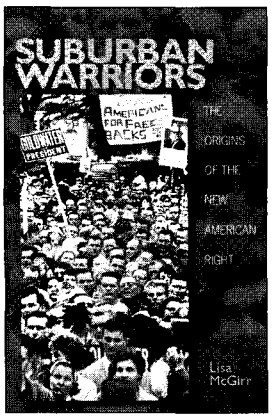

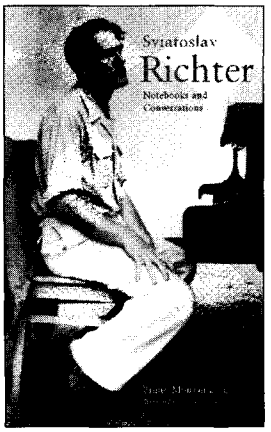

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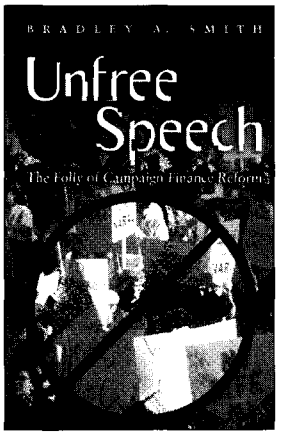

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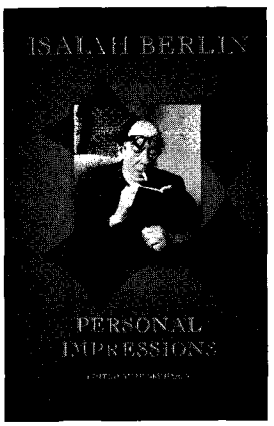

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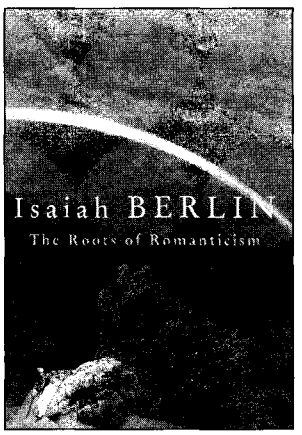

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Lesson Plan

SINCE IT BROKE away from the former Yugoslavia ten long years ago, Macedonia has been just about the only light in the darkness of the Balkans: the only democracy that has maintained the precarious balance among its ethnic populations. As diverse as Sarajevo, but with a popularly elected parliament representative of its melting-pot population, it has been a working example of the possibilities for the region. Until now. Watching the escalation of conflict in northwestern Macedonia these past few weeks—ethnic Albanian rebels began a ragtag military campaign in late February, and last week Skopje struck back—people in Washington and elsewhere have begun speaking of Macedonia in the gloomy tones reserved for Bosnia and Kosovo.

It is important to be clear, morally and historically, about the events in Macedonia, not least so that the Bush administration—which came into office hoarse from its campaign promise to pull American soldiers out of the Balkans—does not seize upon this crisis to act on its isolationist inclinations. For a start, we must resist false analogies with Kosovo. The Albanian rebels who have infiltrated Macedonia are not freedom fighters, and they are not heroes defending their people against murder, rape, and expulsion by local warlords or xenophobic neighbors. The Albanian insurgents have adopted the rhetoric of Macedonia's ethnic Albanians, claiming in the press that all they seek is equality. It is unclear how many of them are part of an actual indigenous force and how many have slipped across the border from Kosovo.

They claim to be fighting for the rights of ethnic Albanians: equality under Macedonia's constitution, more representation of Albanians in the upper echelons of the military, making the Albanian tongue an official state language, accrediting a state university with classes in Albanian. But curriculum reform is hardly a reason to take up arms. Moreover, Boris Trajkovski, Macedonia's democratically elected president, who is backed by a democratically elected, multiethnic parliament that includes ethnic Albanian parties, is not Slobodan Milosevic. Trajkovski is right to crush this unjustified and perilous insurrection. And he deserves credit for declaring that the use of force against the Albanian rebels will be accompanied in a matter of weeks by political measures to remedy the injustices of which the Albanians in his country complain.

It is a harsh irony that the instigation of ethnic conflict in Macedonia has been the work of Albanians. Weren't Albanians the victims just yesterday? But this is today, and Macedonia is not Kosovo. Macedonia is made up of a fragile web of ethnic groups: Albanians, the majority Slavs, Turks, Vlachs, Serbs, and Roma. The country has uneasily sat out the conflicts of the last decade, even as international observers feared the tipping of that society as it absorbed the seemingly endless flow of mostly Albanian refugees from neighboring Kosovo. The recent fighting has panicked the Macedonian parliament. And a panicked government—flailing about without international aid or benefactors—makes panicky decisions: the attack on the Albanian insurgents last week was launched without first solidifying the shaky coalition of Albanians and Slavs in parliament and may have destabilized that body. (Already one ethnic Albanian political party has begun boycotting parliament.) It takes very little to start a fire in such a situation. And Macedonia's stability has ramifications beyond its borders. With Serbia to the north and Greece to the south, Macedonia, if it ends up in flames, could ignite the whole region.

For this reason, the United States—equipped, we hope, with the knowledge of what American dithering wrought in the past decade—should act quickly to fortify Macedonia and its democracy. A strong condemnation of the rebels and robust support of Macedonia's legitimate government must come from Washington. It is not enough that the secretary-general of NATO and representatives of the European Union have visited Skopje: Only the clear involvement of the United States can effectively address the situation. The United States and NATO have failed so far to prevent the infiltration of weapons and people across the porous border between Kosovo and Macedonia. While the Macedonian government has repelled this first round of skirmishes, the army—with only 16,000 troops on active duty, a budget of a mere $100 million, and just six helicopters—is simply not equipped to fight a full pitched battle. We need to ensure that it will not have to.

After Kosovo, Albanians throughout the Balkans see the United States as their protector. Showing the moderate Albanian population—and their elected officials—that we forcibly reject the violence of the rebels will be an immeasurable aid in Macedonia's effort to isolate the insurgency. And it will remind everybody that the United States supports democratic principles, not ethnic groups. ■

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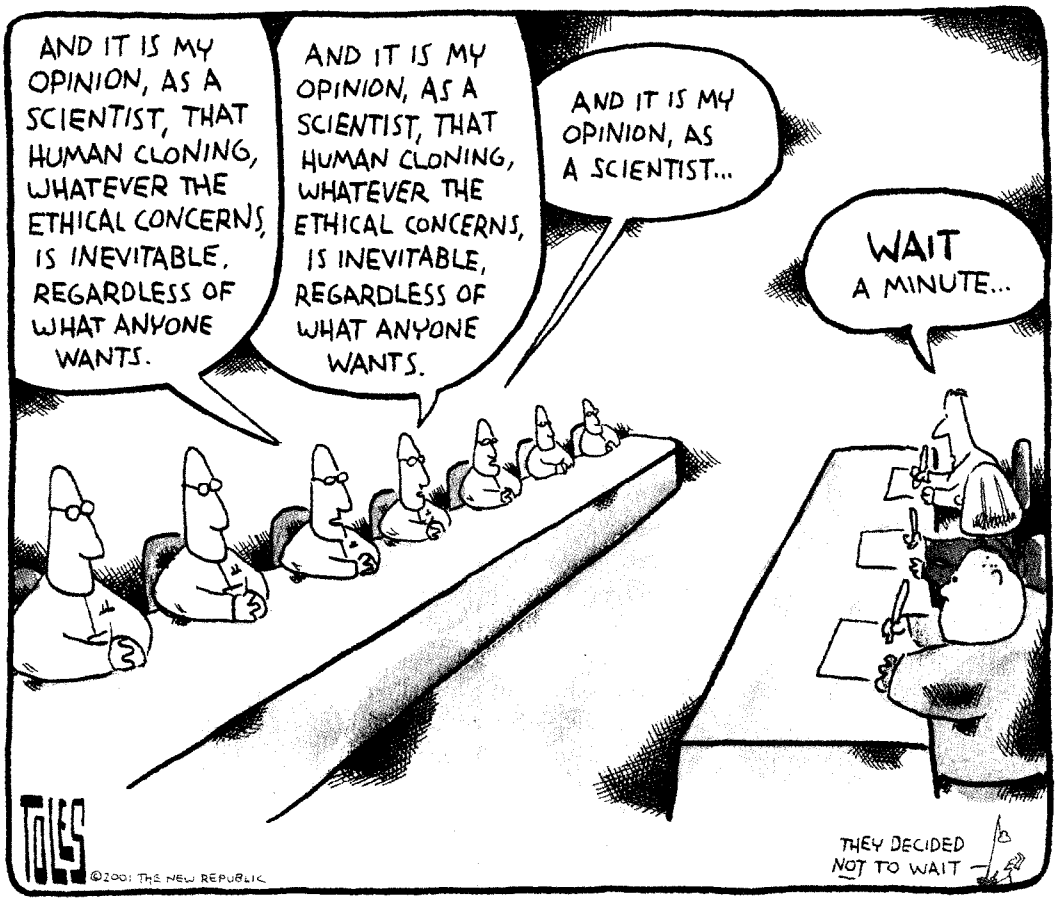
NOTEBOOK

CUT BAIT: In his big economic speech this week in Kalamazoo, Michigan, President Bush was a portrait of a man hilariously entangled in the web of his own dishonesty. Stung by accusations that he has exacerbated the economic downturn with his gloomy talk, Bush emphasized the underlying soundness of the economy, comparing it to a long-distance runner—"somewhat winded, but fundamentally strong." But a few moments later he argued that "our economy needs more than a pick-me-up, more than a one-time boost." Of course, if the economy is merely "winded" while still "fundamentally strong," then a pick-me-up is precisely what it needs, and a long-term change of direction is precisely what it does not need. The reason Bush can't keep his story straight is that it never made sense in the first place. The real goal of Bush's tax cut has always been to reduce the progressivity of the tax code and starve the government of revenue that might otherwise be used for spending. But in the past few months the president has discovered that his most successful argument is to pitch the tax cut as a cure for the current economic slowdown—this despite the fact that it would do virtually nothing this year. In keeping with his economic-stimulus argument, Bush has been stressing how important it is for Congress to pass the tax cut quickly. Recently, Democrats in Congress have taken him at his word—proposing an immediate $60 billion tax rebate. Bush opposes this because it would take away his ability to use the urgency of a potential recession to whipsaw Congress into allocating the entire ten-year budget surplus all at once. Since he can't say so, he has to argue that it's somehow crucial that Congress pass a short-term stimulus and a long-term tax cut at the same time. "Some in Congress," he declared, "want America to choose between these goals." But Democrats in Congress aren't saying that. They merely want to pass the short-term tax cut quickly, while theoretically it could still do some good, and then debate the permanent tax cut. Bush is the one who's suggesting that passing the first might reduce demand for the second. What he's admitting, tacitly, is that he can't sell it on its own merits.

STAR POWER: News Corporation Chairman Rupert Murdoch has made a name for himself over the years as one of China's leading sycophants. To curry favor with Beijing, Murdoch has kicked the BBC off his Hong Kong-based satellite TV service, directed his publishing house to pull a book deemed critical of the Chinese dictatorship, and generally allowed acquisitiveness to trump human rights. Now his son James Murdoch has proved the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Speaking at a business conference in California, young Murdoch, who runs News Corp.'s Hong Kong-based Star TV company, denounced the Falun Gong movement as a "dangerous" cult that "clearly does not have the success of China at heart." Abasing himself further, he excoriated the Western press for covering human rights abuses in China and warned, "[T]hese destabilizing forces today are very, very dangerous for the Chinese government." Yes, Mr. Murdoch, journalists more interested in truth than profit often are.

OFFICE ENVIRONMENT: For years, one of the amusements of THE NEW REPUBLIC's Dupont Circle neighborhood has been a handsome 19th Street townhouse adjacent to a lot emblazoned with a menacing red-lettered sign that reads: PARKING RESERVED FOR DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE. Evidently Defenders of Wildlife officials commute by car, though an entrance to the clean, safe, efficient Washington subway system is less than 100 yards from their door. But now the National Wildlife Federation has done the Defend-



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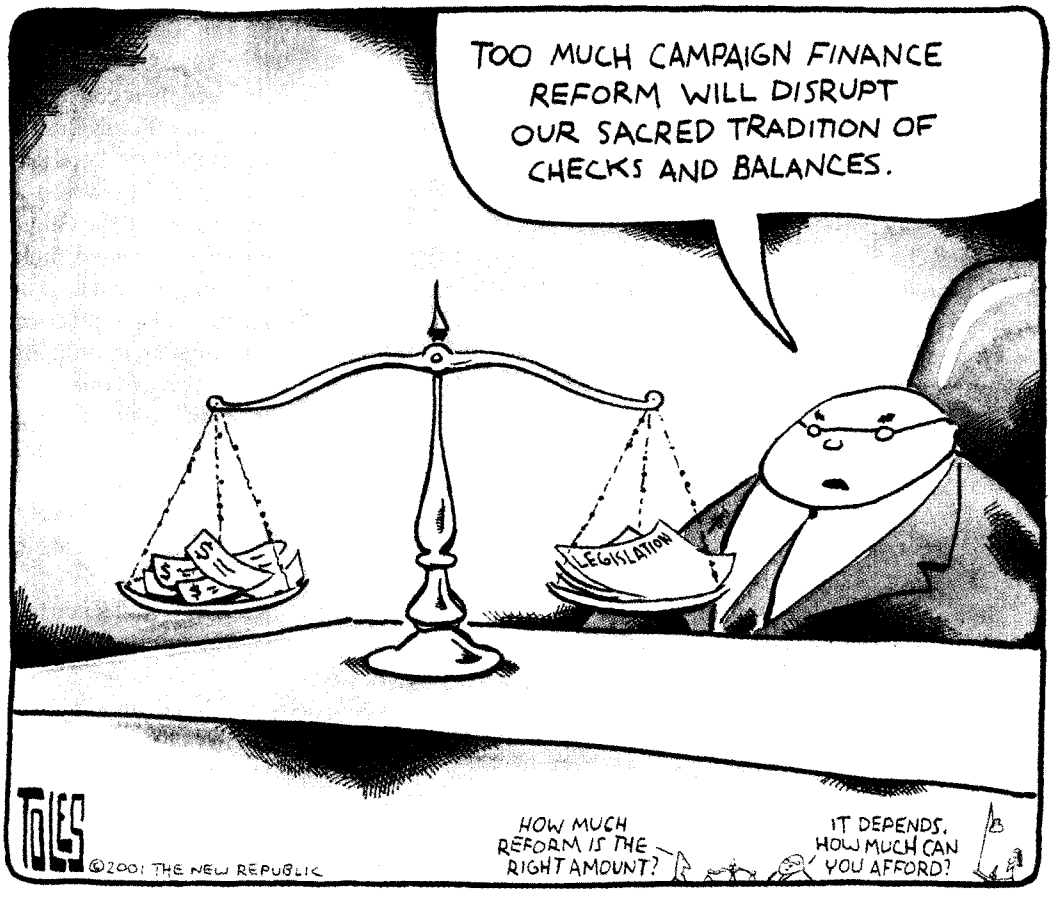
ers one better with its new headquarters in the Washington suburb of Reston, Virginia. The $17.4 million complex is low-rise, low-density sprawl—the kind of development National Wildlife Federation position papers regularly denounce. Most striking, the new office has a 285-car parking lot: not even a tiered garage but a flat, mall-style lot whose construction required the clear-cutting of several acres of pines, poplars, and red maples. Staff members at the new National Wildlife Federation headquarters total 249, which means there is more than one parking place per person, ensuring that no National Wildlife Federation employee ever need carpool to a day's work of writing denouncements of fossil-fuel consumption and the wasteful cutting of trees.

FRANK BRUNI PRESIDENTIAL WATCH, CONT'D: "[Bush adviser Margaret Tutwiler] also has a funny, chatty, ebullient side. She is equal parts classy and sassy, which may just be another way of saying she is very Southern.... Family connections helped her land a job with Gerald R. Ford's 1976 presidential campaign, but a fierce work ethic and innate savvy helped take her from there."—*The New York Times*, March 26

ON SECOND THOUGHT, IT IS OUR HOUSE: "[W]e want to remind everybody that this is not our house. This is the people's house," said George W. Bush at a White House event the day after his inauguration. Of course, just because it's the people's house doesn't mean they get to visit it—as the new regime has made clear by dramatically reducing the number of public tours. In the past, White House tours ran Tuesdays through Saturdays, ten o' clock in the morning till noon—and if you were in line at noon, you'd generally be guaranteed a tour. Since the new first family moved in, however, the U.S. Park Service has closed the line as early as ten. And now that peak tourist season has begun—meaning visitors can get tickets ahead of time rather than wait on line—the White House has cut the number of tickets offered daily from 4,500 to 2,250. We see how this might help restore dignity to the White House, but honor?

UMMM ... YOU LOST MICHIGAN: "I remember campaigning here in the great state of Michigan.... And people kept saying, 'Well, it just doesn't seem like your tax plan's getting much steam. Nobody seems interested.' And I said, 'Well, I think you miscalculated our campaign. It's not one that's based upon polls or focus groups.'"—Bush, March 27

RIGHT AND WRONG: Due to an editing error, Stephen Metcalf's article "Numbers Racket" (February 12) identified Diane Ravitch as a "right-wing education commentator." Only the last two words of that quote are correct. While Ravitch often irks liberals, her politics are too complicated and too independent to equate with Lynne Cheney's. TNR, of all places, should recognize the difference.



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: In the Notebook section of the April 2 issue, we identified Jesse Jackson's illegitimate child as a son. The child is in fact a daughter. We apologize for the error.

HOME NEWS: We are pleased to announce the latest feature at THE NEW REPUBLIC ONLINE. Through a partnership with Plastic.com, we now host discussion threads for the articles posted on the site. Visit *www.thenewrepublic.com* and click on one of the many "Discuss" links or on a Plastic icon to join the conversation. Happy posting. ■

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How McCain-Feingold could save the Dems.

Green Monster

By Peter Beinart

Some of America's smartest columnists think the Senate Democrats are on the verge of doing something very dumb—passing campaign finance reform. The argument goes like this: The centerpiece of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill is a ban on "soft money"—the unregulated sums that in theory pay for "party building" but in reality pay for virtually everything. The Democrats, the argument goes, now take in as much soft money as the Republicans. But they still raise far less in "hard money"—the regulated contributions that come in bite-size $1,000 chunks. So passing McCain-Feingold would outlaw the type of fund-raising Democrats do well and allow the type they don't. Noting that most Democrats back the legislation and most Republicans oppose it, Jacob Weisberg wrote last month in *Slate.com* that "from the point of view of rational self-interest, the two parties would now seem to have it precisely backwards."

Of course, if you believe in the inherent goodness of campaign finance reform more than you believe in the inherent goodness of the Democratic Party, this argument is beside the point: It's perfectly rational to pass the former at the latter's expense. But many liberals really believe that the best way to edify American politics is to aggrandize the Democratic Party (especially those liberals with seats in the U.S. Senate). And so it's important to take on Weisberg's argument on its own terms.

First of all, McCain-Feingold doesn't only ban soft money, where Democrats and Republicans are even; it also restricts expenditures by independent groups, where GOP allies greatly outspend Democratic ones. Sure, the Supreme Court may deem that provision unconstitutional. But, depending on future amendments, doing so could eliminate the legislation entirely, knocking out the soft money ban that theoretically hurts the Dems—and with it any reason for them to vote against the overall bill.

More importantly, there's good reason to suspect the current soft money parity won't last. It is, after all, a recent development. Between 1977 and 1992, according to the Federal Election Commission, the Democrats raised 34 percent as much soft money as the GOP. Between 1993 and 2000, they raised 89 percent as much. And if you look only at 1999 and 2000, the Democrats raised 99 percent as much. Why have they caught up? Sure, the party may have grown somewhat more adept at sucking up to rich liberal donors and selling out to rich corporate ones, but there's a more obvious, two-word answer: Bill Clinton. The former president turned the White House into a soft-money-raising machine—renting himself out evening after evening at $50,000-per-plate dinners and, when that wasn't enough, renting out the Lincoln Bedroom as well. Through sheer determination (or sheer avarice, depending on your point of view), Clinton personally counterbalanced the GOP's structural advantage as the party of corporate America. But now he's in Chappaqua, and Pardongate has severely undercut his ability to keep the Democrats financially competitive. In short, the shrewdest thing the Democrats could do now would be to ban soft money before the discrepancy reemerges—while some Republicans (aided by pundits like Weisberg) think banning it is in the GOP's self-interest.

But the real reason Democrats shouldn't sink McCain-Feingold has nothing to do with whether they can keep pace with the GOP in soft money. After all, the Democrats matched the GOP in soft money this year, and they still lost the White House. The reason (OK, *besides* the Supreme Court): Ralph Nader. A viable Green Party is at least as big a problem for the Democrats as being out-fund-raised by the Republicans. And what was the single biggest rationale for Nader's support in 2000? The belief that the Democrats were as corrupted by corporate money as the Republicans. If the Democrats want to double the number of voters who believe that, all they have to do is kill McCain-Feingold. And if that number doubles, the Democrats won't lose just Florida in 2004; they'll lose Wisconsin, Michigan, and Oregon as well.

Passing McCain-Feingold, by contrast, could help the Democrats enormously. In fact, if I were Tom Daschle, I'd do everything in my power not only to pass it but to force a Bush veto. How come? Because the best way to counterpunch the ascendant Bushies today is the way the Dems counterpunched the ascendant Gingrichites in 1995. In the 1994 elections, the Republicans effectively hitched their conservative ideology to an agenda of populist reform. Frank Luntz, Ross Perot's pollster, devised the Contract With America, which included such populist items as term limits and a balanced-budget amendment. But, once in office, the Gingrichites abandoned their populist veneer and invited their K Street donors literally to write legislation gutting a host of environmental and labor laws. The Democrats loudly cried foul, and the congressional GOP lost its populist mantle. As TNR's John B. Judis notes in *The Paradox of American Democracy*, a Times-Mirror survey at the end of 1995 showed that 72 percent of Americans believed lobbyists wielded as much influence over Congress as they had before the Gingrichites took over. The GOP lost its moral authority, and the Democrats retained the presidency and won seats in the House in 1996.

In the last couple of weeks, George W. Bush has started looking vulnerable in exactly the way the congressional GOP did in 1995. Last year, he used the Clinton scandals to reestablish the GOP's moral image—running as an anti-big-government, anti-sleaze populist. But now, as Republicans are wont to do, Bush is tarnishing that image by overturning popular environmental and labor regulations at the behest of his corporate contributors. If the Democrats capitalize on these moves to tar Bush as arrogant and out of touch—as

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TNR editor Peter Beinart's weekly column, "Punditry," can be read in The New Republic Online (*www.thenewrepublic.com*).

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Two *Good* Reasons for a Tax Cut

David R. Henderson is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and an economics professor at the Naval Postgraduate School.

President Bush's proposed tax cut, though small, is a step in the right direction. To put the tax cut in perspective, over ten years it amounts to a cut of only about 1 percent of GDP. Compare that to Reagan's 1981 tax cut that cut taxes by almost 3 percent of GDP. And Reagan did so starting from a budget deficit rather than a surplus.

Unfortunately, Bush and some of his advisers are using a bad argument for a good policy. The reason to cut taxes early, they say, is that the economy is slowing and tax cuts will cause people to spend more. That's a pure "demand-side" argument, the kind that former President Reagan and his advisers rightly dismissed when they advocated the 1981 tax cut. Decades of evidence have shown that the main factor that increases spending is growth in the money supply. If any policy should be used to affect the growth rate of spending, it should be monetary policy.

But we should cut taxes and even more than Bush advocates. Moreover, **taxes should be cut independent of the current growth of the economy.**

There are two main reasons for cutting taxes. First, the current tax system badly mauls incentives. Take people in the top (39.6 percent) tax bracket. In 1997, these people were only 0.7 percent of taxpayers, but they paid 26 percent of all income taxes. High tax rates cause them to earn less taxable income, not just by working fewer hours but also by taking more pay in fringe benefits and investing in tax-free municipal bonds. The across-the-board cuts in tax rates that Bush proposes would increase everyone's incentive to earn taxable income. When the tax cut is fully implemented, high-bracket taxpayers, for example, will be in the 33 percent bracket. Thus, their after-tax gain from an additional dollar of income rises from 60.4 cents to 67 cents, an 11 percent increase. This was the "supply-side" case made by Ronald Reagan and his advisers when they cut tax rates.

Similarly, cuts in the 15 percent and 28 percent tax rates would increase incentives of lower- and middle-income earners to earn taxable income. This boosts the economy long term and makes tax revenue higher than otherwise. With this feedback effect of the Bush tax cut added in, estimates Harvard University's Martin Feldstein, the feds would lose, not the oft-cited $1.6 trillion but, rather, $1.2 trillion, or less than 25 percent of the anticipated budget surplus.

Some critics of the Bush tax cut claim that it does nothing for lower-income people. But it does cut taxes of everyone who pays federal income taxes. Simple truth: you can't reduce taxes for people paying no taxes.

Which brings me to the more important reason to cut taxes: those **taxes are *our* money,** meaning the money of the people who paid them. If the government keeps the revenue, it will pay down some debt but spend the rest, as it did in the last Congress. We the people need to restrain Congress and the president from spending our money.

— David R. Henderson

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they did Gingrich—they can put themselves in a strong position for 2002 and 2004. And the best way to make that tar stick is to force Bush to veto campaign finance reform. A campaign finance reform veto, combined with Bush's K Street sellouts, could permanently shatter his outsider, "change the tone in Washington" political persona. If, on the other hand, the Dems kill campaign finance reform, they obscure Bush's corruption and highlight their own. That's not simply immoral, it's just plain dumb. ■

On the Hill

Dull and Duller

By Michael Crowley

The hearing in Dirksen Senate Office Building Room 608 is tedium defined. Four frumpy economists are testifying about federal debt reduction before members of the Senate Budget Committee. Only seven of the committee's 22 members have bothered to show up, two of whom whisper and chuckle through much of the testimony. But one listens with rapt attention. Sipping coffee from a Styrofoam cup as the economists drone on about Treasury bond buybacks and the "irreducible minimum" level of federal debt, she alternatively nods, grins, and shakes her head. When it is her turn to speak, Hillary Rodham Clinton admits, "I don't understand half of what they said. But it all sounded very, you know, expert to me." She cheerily pledges to look into a complex proposal to store budget surpluses in an interest-bearing account.

Later that day I accompany Clinton, who is returning from a press conference where senators criticized George W. Bush's decision to repeal regulations limiting arsenic in drinking water, through a Capitol basement corridor. Trailed by Secret Service agents and gawking tourists, she sports her standard-issue black pantsuit, a blue shirt, and a formidable hairdo that has been resuscitated after a brief, well-publicized period of neglect. Referring to the morning's debt hearing, I ask how she survives the torpor. "I think it's so serious that I'm fixated," she explains in her okeydoke, elementary-school-teacher voice. "I think it's fun.... I love talking about a fifty or ten [parts per billion] level of arsenic, or what is the level of irreducible debt. For me these things have real meaning."

Who thought it would come to this? When Hillary Clinton emerged from marital humiliation to become the first first lady in American history to win a seat in the U.S. Senate, the commentariat predicted she'd take Capitol Hill by storm. The New York *Daily News* trumpeted her "desire to position herself as the new intellectual and fund-raising leader for the out-of-power Democrats." Crowning her "perhaps the most important Democrat in the country," *The New York Times* called it a "fantasy" to think she would "blend into the woodwork as just another freshman senator." She topped every list of prospective Democratic presidential nominees for 2004.

But she's not on those lists anymore. In fact, she barely even makes the papers (except when mentioned in the same paragraph as Denise Rich). If Clinton fantasized in her post-health-care days about liberating herself from her gilded prison of White House interior decorating to participate in Serious Policy once again, she's gotten her wish. And it isn't pretty. Crouching low to avoid the pardon scandals battering her husband's ex-presidency, Clinton has submerged herself in policy minutiae that would make a C-SPAN junkie snore. Far from giving the congressional Democrats star power, she makes Evan Bayh look glamorous and Kent Conrad seem visionary. People expected Hillary Clinton to be a lot of things in the U.S. Senate—except, perhaps, for the one thing she has become: banal.

Clinton's Senate campaign was a case study in the strange art of calculated blandness. But many assumed that, once in office, she would discard the mind-numbing caution that characterized her victory over Rick Lazio. Then came the Clinton exit fiasco: the alleged looting of White House furniture, the Marc Rich and New Square pardons, and the bogus (but still damaging) frenzy over the price of her Manhattan district office. Her unfavorable ratings shot up—one poll showed that more than 60 percent of New York voters thought she "broke the law" or "acted unethically." The *New York Observer* even demanded that she resign.

She has responded by hunkering down and abandoning any pretense of defining the shape and future of her party. She disappointed party liberals by keeping virtually mum during the fight over John Ashcroft's nomination as attorney general, finally releasing a bloodless statement that Ashcroft's views "are too often at vari-

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ance with the high principles we seek to embody in the law." She has been a nonentity in the Senate's freewheeling debate over campaign finance reform. She avoids the Sunday morning talk shows and rarely speaks to reporters.

Once upon a time Clinton might have relished a Senate perch from which to offer up grand ideas. "We need a new politics of meaning," she declared to *The Washington Post* in her heady early days in the White House. The goal, she explained, was nothing short of "redefining who we are as human beings in this postmodern age." But these days Clinton speaks either in vanilla talking points ("I support ... a prudent tax cut that will allow us to pursue our important national values while keeping interest rates down and encouraging economic growth") or grueling wonk-speak ("[W]e can have OSHA initiate rule-making procedures to modify the rule in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act," she offered on the topic of ergonomics). Gone are the large policy ambitions. When she delivered a brief floor address about health care last month, Clinton could hardly have been more circumspect. She joked that she had once had "an idea or two about how to improve health care in our country" but had learned "the wisdom of taking small steps to get a big job done." So she proposed limited measures like expanding the federal Children's Health Insurance Program.

And rather than associate herself with the large national debates pitting her party against the Bush presidency, Clinton seems almost proud of her newfound parochialism. She tirelessly promotes her eye-glazing economic revitalization plan for upstate New York. (Never mind that the package of tax credits, job-training programs, and Internet-wiring funds for New York has little chance of passing in this Congress.) In the same Senator Pothole vein, there's her bill to name a New York City courthouse after Thurgood Marshall and a burgeoning budget squabble with the Bush administration over historic-preservation funding for Ellis Island. "She clearly knows and understands that she's a freshman," says a top Democratic aide, choosing words carefully.

Clinton's Republican colleagues seem strangely relieved. As a senior GOP aide puts it: "She's really made an effort to [lie] low.... She is acting as a nonentity and a nonplayer at this point, and they haven't had to deal with it." That's the way they like it—because for Republicans nothing good comes of dealing with Hillary Clinton. On one hand, attacking her is dangerous (just ask Rick Lazio). "Hillary Clinton the victim means Republicans lose," a GOP staffer recently told *The Washington Post*. On the other hand, cooperating can be problematic, too. After right-wing Illinois Senator Peter Fitzgerald dared to lunch with her, the *Chicago Tribune* reported that "members of [Fitzgerald's] conservative base were sputtering mad." Perhaps that explains why twelve Democrats have co-sponsored parts of her upstate plan but only one Republican has—the moderate Olympia Snowe of Maine. Generally, other senators simply ignore her.

Clinton does allow herself the occasional swipe at Bush. At last week's press conference on the president's arsenic decisions, for instance, she came up with a nice line about his charm offensive turning into "a harm offensive." But she did everything possible to downplay her own words. Following some colleagues who literally yelled in outrage, Clinton smiled placidly and spoke calmly. She even insisted on speaking last, inviting obscure freshman Senator Bill Nelson of Florida to precede her.

Someday, especially if Democrats win back the Senate and Bill Clinton has no more scandalous toilet paper trailing from his shoe, Hillary Clinton may indeed emerge as Ted Kennedy's successor—a champion of social services with a national constituency, media appeal, and political clout. But there's little sign of that so far. "Her career as a senator ultimately begins the day the pardon scandal is closed," says New York Democratic consultant Hank Sheinkopf. For now, her goals are modest. Take a recent press release from her office excitedly announcing, "Senator Clinton scores victories in Education Committee for NY's students." The hype is about four education-bill amendments so uncontroversial that all were approved unanimously—and only by the Education Committee, not the full Senate. One "helps encourage school districts to undertake new efforts to recruit school principals." Another "guarantees that students and parents will be given the results of 'accountability' tests in a prompt and useful manner." Not exactly radical change or high drama. But, then, that's exactly the point. ■

Is Bush caving on education reform?

Only a Test

By MICHELLE COTTLE

LEAVE. NO. CHILD. BEHIND. Months after covering George W. Bush's journey to the White House, I can still hear those words echoing in my head. From the frozen fields of Iowa to the sun-scorched tarmacs of Florida, George W. called education his "top priority," decried "the soft bigotry of low expectations," and declared that the way to save our public schools was through the twin pillars of accountability and choice. "Accountability," in this formulation, meant requiring states to test every student in reading and math, every year from third through eighth grade. ("Without that information," W. explained, "there's no true accountability, no pressure for change.") "Choice" meant channeling federal funds away from failing schools and into the hands of parents, in the form of vouchers. ("There has to be a consequence," W. vowed, "and one of the consequences is to allow parents to have different choices.") Take "leave no child behind," mix in Bush's faith-based plan to "rally the armies of compassion," and voilà: compassionate conservatism, W.'s particular contribution to Republican thought.

But in the two months since W. took office, compassionate conservatism hasn't been faring that well. As Franklin Foer and Ryan Lizza showed in these pages last week ("Holy War," April 2), the Bush administration has rallied the armies of compassion mainly against one another. Threatened by fierce

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Democratic and teachers' union opposition, the White House effectively abandoned vouchers before the education debate in Congress even got rolling. And now there are signs the president will fold on testing as well, this time in deference to local-control enthusiasts within his own party. In fact, Bush has been so busy flogging his tax cuts that he's had virtually no time left to trumpet his testing plans—or education in general, for that matter. I haven't heard him utter a feel-good education cliché in weeks. It's enough to make you nostalgic.

VOUCHERS WERE THE first part of Bush's education plan to bite the dust. Word of Bush's willingness to abandon the issue had been floating on the wind since January. In March, when the Senate education committee released its main education bill, sans vouchers, it was met with deafening silence from the White House—no statement of disappointment from the president, no veto threats from the vice president (who has been happy to sound off on issues such as campaign finance reform and taxes). Even the most devoted advocates of school choice admit (not on the record, of course) that the political outlook for vouchers is bleak. Better, they say, to focus on the less controversial elements of Bush's proposal—for instance, mandatory testing.

But now testing is in trouble, too. The Bushies insist their commitment to "accountability" is nonnegotiable. In reality, their plan is in danger of being fatally diluted. Already Bush has shied away from requiring states to develop uniform statewide tests—à la his beloved Texas Assessment of Academic Skills test—in the face of pressure from local-control devotees. This dissenting bloc (which includes Bush's old *compadres* at the National Governors' Association) argues that states should be free to use different tests from year to year and region to region. In a gesture of near surrender, a senior Bushie told the *Los Angeles Times* in early March that while the administration would prefer that states adopt uniform statewide tests, "we don't want to tell them to do that."

The issue is generating considerable confusion around Washington, where even Hill staffers and policy analysts can't agree on what the latest draft of the Senate bill requires. Many interpret it as mandating uniform statewide exams, but Joe Karpinski, spokesman for the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, insists that the bill "does not require a single state test. But if there are multiple tests, they would have to be aligned with the state's challenging content and student-performance standards." At this point, says Karpinski, the issue is still very much in play. "I believe the governors have been talking to testing professionals to see how you best go about making multiple tests in a given state work." For its part, the White House has also begun quietly exploring a multi-test approach. As one Bushie explained, this is not a make-or-break issue.

But maybe it should be. If tests vary from district to district and year to year, apples-to-apples comparisons between students will be virtually impossible. "The beauty of a statewide test is that you know whether Cincinnati and Columbus are both improving, and you know whether scores are improving in the third grade for Hispanics or only in the fourth grade for whites," says GOP education analyst Chester Finn Jr., who served as an assistant secretary of education under Ronald Reagan and an outside education adviser to Bush I. "If Cincinnati and [Columbus] give different tests, one test in the third grade and one in the fourth, an awful lot of external analysis and monitoring just can't be done." In other words, Bush's grand accountability plan could well result in a system in which we do little more than compare fourth graders in Bel Air with other fourth graders in Bel Air, third graders in Watts with other third graders in Watts, and so on.

EVEN IF UNIFORM statewide testing ultimately prevails, states whose numbers lag will face more than a slight temptation to "rethink their standards"—i.e., dumb down their tests. Finn notes the "Lake Wobegon effect" of the mid-'80s, when, using a variety of tests, every one of the 50 states (as well as the vast majority of school districts) boasted that it was performing above the national average.

As originally conceived, the Bush plan addressed this dilemma by requiring states to administer the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test in grades four and eight each year, to see how one state's students compared with other states'. But this element of Bush's plan is drawing even greater fire than are the statewide tests. Thus, in the House education bill, conservatives have "improved" the audit requirement with a provision allowing states to administer either the NAEP "or another assessment selected by the state meeting widely recognized professional and technical standards." This, says Finn, is a monumentally bad idea. "The NAEP is by far the country's best source of data on state-by-state student achievement compared to both other states and the country as a whole," he insists. Other tests, like the Stanford 9 and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, don't serve the same purpose, and scores on the various exams are virtually impossible to compare. People who say they can be compared, sighs Finn, "are living in cloud cuckoo land."

As of now, the Senate bill still mandates NAEP testing. But observers say the provision may face assault from both sides of the aisle once it hits the floor. Republican members such as Judd Gregg have argued that states need more options, while Democrats such as Paul Wellstone have objected to high-stakes testing in general. And, once again, although the Bush folks express optimism that the NAEP mandate will survive, there has been no warning from the White House—either publicly or during internal negotiations—that this is a deal breaker. "We're agnostic on some of these questions, and that's one of them," says a Bush adviser. "Ideally we would want one test, but this is a political process."

But the tax debate is also a "political process"—the difference is that it's one in which the White House is willing to exert massive political pressure (despite polls showing education to be a higher priority with voters). Unless the president starts showing interest in his "top priority" and uses his bully pulpit to influence the ongoing education debate, we'll likely end up with . . . four more years of the same. "Basically, the status quo will continue," Finn says of intrastate testing—and adds that interstate comparisons could actually become harder. Given this, maybe Bush II should adopt a more accurate slogan: "Leave No Tax Cut Behind." ■

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W.'s surprising support for Israel.

Enemies, A Love Story

By Martin Peretz

When Israel overwhelmingly elected Ariel Sharon two months ago, *The Economist* put him on its cover with an alarmist epithet: "the world's worry." Of course, no Israeli leader was ever reassuring enough—which is to say, pliable enough—for *The Economist*. But, to be fair, Sharon's election sent shivers down the spines of some Israelis as well.

That was then. Today, Zion contains far fewer palpitating backbones than it did on February 6. What's more, the world isn't worried about Sharon either; much of it seems downright relieved. After all, the great nation-states cannot truly be comforted when a stable, democratic polity makes hazardous concessions, as the Barak government did, to an entity that rules its own people, and threatens others, with terror. In fact, when the history of our era is written, terror will be seen as the Palestinians' distinctive contribution to modern politics. This is understood even in Moscow, where Vladimir Putin must ruminate darkly that the Palestinian model of relentless terror, sponsored not long ago by the Soviet Union, is partly responsible for Russia's ongoing Chechen nightmare. In Western Europe, as well, patience with Yasir Arafat is wearing thin. Only Belgium seems eager to carry water for his corrupt little tyranny. And Belgium is, well, only Belgium.

But the most telling index of how Sharon is faring abroad came from his visit last week to the United States. There was every reason to believe Sharon would find himself on a collision course with the new American administration. After all, the entourage around George W. Bush looks a lot like the entourage around his father, and his father's presidency was notably hostile to Israel. When James "Fuck the Jews" Baker surfaced as the chief Bush strategist in postelection Florida (where Jews had voted for Al Gore and Joe Lieberman by stunning margins—at least those who didn't mistakenly vote for Pat Buchanan), the prospect of another foe of Zion in the White House seemed all too real. Moreover, neither Colin Powell nor Condoleezza Rice (a protégée of General Brent Scowcroft, himself cool to the Jewish state) had ever demonstrated much empathy for Israel's predicament. And Powell hinted that Israel would have to pay a strategic price for the renewed Middle Eastern alliance against Saddam Hussein. (Luckily and unluckily for the Jewish state, that alliance almost certainly won't reemerge.) There was also the Bushies' proximity to the oil industry. And their campaign for Arab-American votes. Taken together, the chances seemed slim that such people would give Israel—especially Israel led by Ariel Sharon—a sympathetic hearing.

The first indication Sharon's U.S. visit would go better than expected was the reaction of the media. Neither *The New York Times* nor *The Washington Post*, the twin pillars of liberal foreign policy orthodoxy, treated him like a pariah, something they used to do routinely. Even *Time* magazine, which lost a libel suit to Sharon after the Lebanon war and carried on a squalid guerrilla action against him for years thereafter, treated him with respect. (The libel tale is instructive. *Time* charged that, in a meeting with Phalange leaders the morning after the assassination of Bashir Gemayal, the Christian Phalange commander who had been elected president of Lebanon, Sharon told them that he understood "the need for the Phalangists to take revenge." The magazine was implying he ordered the massacre. Sharon sued and won a small victory: A jury found the article "false" and "defamatory" but not "malicious." This is all described in a marvelously detailed legal thriller by Renata Adler, *Reckless Disregard*.) And, of course, the leading periodicals of the American right have long since made peace with Israel and with the Israeli right in particular. *The Weekly Standard* did not need to make peace; it was born friendly to Israel.

The media's reaction was echoed in the halls of government. The Bush administration seemed to sympathize with Israel's position that it would not negotiate with the Palestinian Authority so long as the PA sponsored violence and terror in the streets. Nobody pressed Sharon to reprise the concessions Ehud Barak made under pressure from Bill Clinton. Some say Israel's allies at the Defense Department have the upper hand over Israel's detractors at State (see "Drill Sergeant," by Lawrence F. Kaplan, TNR, March 26). Some say Dubya's support is personal—that he has liked Sharon ever since the then-minister of infrastructure took the then-governor of Texas on a tour of the West Bank in 1998. Whatever the reason, Israel, remarkably, now has stauncher allies in the White House than it had throughout the 1990s.

The white house's embrace of Sharon is yet more evidence of a sea change in public attitudes toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One recent poll of U.S. opinion found that Americans in general are lopsidedly in favor of Israel. It is remarkable that, after so many years of media hostility, from Peter Jennings to CNN, Americans are so fundamentally and wholeheartedly friendly to the Jewish state. Not that they ever favored the Palestinians or the other Arab belligerents. But the identification with Israel and with Israelis is now stronger than ever.

Why the shift? The most obvious answer is Yasir Arafat. He has disenchanted even his friends. Dennis Ross, the chief "peace processor" for twelve years, has concluded that, as he told Clyde Haberman of *The New York Times Magazine* last week, "[Arafat] is not capable of negotiating an end to the conflict." And Ross should know—he spent the last decade persuading others of precisely the opposite. But when Barak gave in to pressure from Clinton and Ross and conceded the entire Golan Heights except for literally a few

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yards, Hafez al-Assad still said no. And when the dynamic of unreciprocated Israeli concessions was repeated again with the Palestinians, Arafat said no as well. No wonder most Americans have developed a healthy skepticism for the peace process—and the dictators upon whose benevolence it was predicated.

Many international observers, including many of Israel's friends, feared Sharon would be a public relations disaster. But, to its great credit, the American public has grasped certain underlying moral truths. Average Americans understand that Sharon's "provocative" visit to the Temple Mount did not cause seven months of disciplined and undisciplined violence. And why was it so provocative? After all, Palestinians can walk around the Western Wall plaza, and many do. Americans also don't seem to believe that Sharon's personal history of rough military tactics disqualifies him for the premiership. And why should it? Such tactics didn't disqualify Barak. And they haven't disqualified Sharon's prospective negotiating partner, a man whose hands are soiled by the Munich massacre, Ma'alot, the Sudan Embassy siege, and any number of other certified atrocities. They haven't even disqualified the man who actually orchestrated the killings at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps for which Sharon is held responsible. That man, Phalange Commander Elie Hobeika, was, for years, and with the blessing of the government of Syria, a minister in the Lebanese government. Arab politics are not so delicate about mass murders, after all. Yes, an Israeli commission said Sharon was indirectly responsible for not preventing some Arabs from killing other Arabs. Maybe he couldn't. Often Israelis—even Sharon—can't prevent Arabs from killing Jews. He couldn't prevent terrorists from exploding three bombs and gunning down a ten-month-old girl this week alone. And because he couldn't stop them, he this week authorized strikes against PA targets—strikes admirably designed to avoid civilian death.

I DON'T THINK I'd ever met Sharon until my last visit to Israel, in late February. Although I knew I hadn't wanted Barak reelected, I brought to my encounter with his successor the squeamishness of a habitual Labor Zionist. But that squeamishness is outdated. Barak's peace-process disaster has changed, probably permanently, the cartography of Israeli politics. The old right/left lines have eroded. The doves have been humiliated by their very dovishness, by their stubborn insistence on seeing themselves in the intransigent *other*. For their part, many hawks have grasped that some parts of the land of Israel, some parts of Palestine, are not for them; they belong to the *other*. This does not exactly constitute a consensus, but it is a nascent, if tentative, convergence.

When I saw Sharon he was not yet prime minister. Doubtless he was fixed on putting together his Cabinet, which takes great ideological dexterity and sheer stomach. The corridors were full of petitioners and advisers, a maze of contradictions. But he knew what he wanted to say to me: The Arabs of Israel had not been treated well, and, since they did not constitute a fifth column, they deserved redress. The religious status quo—unsatisfactory to everybody and contentious as it was—was not going to change, either way, in the near future. The direct election of the prime minister, independent of elections for parliament, would be terminated. (This happened soon after he took office.) He would not negotiate under conditions of violence and terror. He was not looking for a final peace agreement but interim and practical arrangements that would relieve the pressure on both populations. "It is hard to be a Jew. It is also hard to be a Palestinian," he said more than once—but added that the PA has made it harder. He recognized that the Arabs do not like him, but he said they know that he keeps his pledges.

He alluded to the Kingdom of Jordan, which he said has common interests with Israel too deep to be admitted in public. By contrast, Iraq and Iran, he argued, pose a greater ultimate peril to Israel than the Palestinians. And Israel cannot be passive about these threats. The history and future of the Jewish people, he said, require more Jewish immigrants coming to Israel; the next wave will be from Latin America.

Sharon speaks quietly and precisely. His English is grammatically perfect and quite rich, probably because he grew up under the British mandate. He takes notes during conversations. He asks you to refine what you say, particularize, clear up ambiguities. (Later an aide told me Sharon has been taking notes for years. What a blessing for future historians.) He really listens, and he responds—a rarity among Israeli politicians. He jokes with his security detail. He tells one of them to sit down; the man refuses. The boss cannot order you to break the rules.

SHARON'S GOVERNMENT IS now seven weeks old. The foreign minister, Shimon Peres, ideological adversary though he is, is also a friend. (Yitzhak Rabin was a friend, too, and one of the last people Leah Rabin spoke to from her deathbed was Sharon. According to the Israeli press, she noted that Yitzhak would not have given up the Temple Mount.) Peres speaks convincingly to the outside and modulates the inside. But the Arabs, for now at least, do not care what he says. They are competing with each other to be the most fervent (at least rhetorically) on the Palestinians' behalf. And they are competing for the sympathies of the world. Peres has his work cut out for him. He is ambassador to all the lofty people he has cultivated these past years, the Scandinavians and the U.N. NGOs, those who need to believe that, despite the backwardness of Israel's neighbors on every index of modernization, there is a new Middle East. It's no wonder Sharon chose Peres. Between him and these people there is no common language at all.

But there is a common language between Sharon and Israelis, between Sharon and the Jewish people. He does not convey impossible hopes, and that is a relief right now. The collapse of the peace process was painful for those who believed its promises, but even the most dogged optimists are glad to be freed from the fetters of illusion.

Yes, Israel is the most powerful country in its region. But it is doomed to live dangerously. Israel cannot escape that deep truth by handing over a kilometer here and many kilometers there—Israelis will be murdered even if they do. Sharon's message to Israel: Do not squander your strategic advantages. You are stronger with them than without. ■

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The usual suspects gang up on Taiwan.

Fantasy Island

By Lawrence F. Kaplan

For weeks, Chinese officials have been howling about President Bush's sympathetic stance toward Taiwan—and howling even louder about the possibility he might sell Taiwan ships equipped with the Aegis radar system, which could help the island defend against an attack from the mainland. During his trip to Washington last week, Chinese Vice Premier Qian Qichen threatened that if the United States sells weapons to Taiwan, the "spark" between Beijing and Taipei "will turn into a great flame." But if the Chinese seem wound up about the sale, they're downright nuanced compared to Taiwan's detractors here at home. In what's become a rite of spring, a parade of academics, businessmen, and liberals have begun their march on Washington to oppose closer military ties with Taiwan. Their arguments sound a lot like China's—only they're even less convincing.

First in line are Washington's sinologists. Unlike the Kremlinologists of yesteryear—who, with the exception of a few *Nation* contributors and fans of Russian folk music, came to despise the regime they studied—many of these China experts are sure that the fault for China's belligerence lies anywhere but with Beijing. Mostly, they blame U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. The Nixon Center's David Lampton says we shouldn't sell Taiwan Aegis ships because "[t]he Chinese are making an effort to understand where the new administration is going and build some kind of mutual reassurance and trust." In any case, he has argued, Taiwan's citizens don't really feel threatened by China; and, even if they did, unconditional support from the United States would "encourage unnecessarily provocative behavior by Taiwan." According to this spin, it's no surprise that China reacts angrily to U.S. meddling. Kenneth Lieberthal, a University of Michigan China specialist and President Clinton's engagement point man at the National Security Council, rests his case against the Aegis sale with a warning that "Beijing would likely react very sharply so as to 'teach' the Bush administration that it must take PRC concerns seriously."

But the sinologists' portrait of a provocative Taiwan and a China that merely reacts is sheer fantasy. Taiwan's new leadership has been nothing but conciliatory to the mainland. This even as China has deployed some 300 missiles adjacent to the Taiwan Strait, bolstering that arsenal with 50 more annually for the past few years. It even used Taiwan's 1996 elections as an occasion to splash several of them off the island's coast. Then, on the eve of Taipei's 2000 elections, Beijing announced it had adopted a "timetable" for swallowing up the island and loosened its criteria for the use of force against Taiwan. Admiral Dennis Blair, the commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific, concedes that "[t]here will be a point at which [China's] missile buildup will threaten the sufficient defense of Taiwan and which it is the [U.S.] policy to maintain." But we've already passed that point. Beijing's missile deployments and weapons purchases, coupled with a rusting Taiwanese force, have begun to tip the military balance in its favor: According to Pentagon estimates, China may be able to overwhelm the island's defenses as soon as 2005. Indeed, the only reason China has been inveighing so loudly against Aegis is that the defensive system eventually might neutralize its missile threat. Beijing's fear isn't that Aegis will destabilize the Taiwan Strait. It's that Aegis will restabilize it.

The sinologists may provide intellectual heft to the case against arming Taiwan, but for real results Beijing looks to its most powerful ally: the U.S. business community. Until recently, American companies doing business in China limited themselves to matters directly related to, well, doing business in China. All that changed last year, when the House passed legislation aimed at improving U.S. military relations with Taiwan. The measure proved too much for America's captains of industry, who dispensed with their claim that national security and trade should be delinked and fanned out on Capitol Hill. The bill to bolster Taiwan's security, the president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong complained, would "needlessly affront" China, jeopardizing America's commercial ties with the People's Republic. And, as business allies like Senators Craig Thomas and Max Baucus reminded their colleagues, America's military ties with Taipei were already more than sufficient.

This year, in its campaign to prevent the Aegis sale, Beijing has even dispatched emissaries to Bush père in Houston, hoping he'll knock some sense into Junior. And, according to *The Washington Post*, Liu Huaqiu, a high-ranking Communist Party adviser, claims he's been assured that "friends of China" like Henry Kissinger and Brent Scowcroft will step in to "teach Bush" if there's any trouble. Not to be outdone, trade groups have been holding their own teach-ins, which feature Chinese officials exhorting American businessmen about, among other things, the perils of close military relations with Taiwan.

But those relations aren't nearly as cozy as the China lobby alleges. At the same time China has been building up its missile inventory, the United States has been dumbing down the weapons it provides Taiwan, stripping planes of guidance and weapons systems from which other foreign recipients routinely benefit and severely limiting contact between U.S. and Taiwanese forces. These restrictions aren't just silly, they're dangerous. As a result, the U.S. military doesn't even have the means to communicate directly, much less operate side by side, with Taiwan's military. As a recent RAND study put it, even predicting that we can "keep [Taiwan's] military and the U.S. military out of each other's way ... may in fact overstate the degree of cooperation that would be possible if war were to break out." Not to worry, though. What's good for the U.S.-China Business Council is good for America.

But, for all its cynicism, at least the business community's arguments make sense. The same can't be said for those Americans convinced that Taiwan is still ruled by Chiang Kai-shek and championed by Henry Luce. Consider *The American Prospect*, which last year looked all the way to the

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John Birch Society to discredit Taiwan's cause. "[T]he proposed tough line from the right," it revealed, "starts to look rather different when the subterranean roots of their obsession are exposed to full view." Nor would a *New York Times* editorial against selling arms to Taiwan be complete without bemoaning the fact that support for the idea comes from conservative Republicans. For the same reason, liberal congressmen who score China for its denial of political freedom harbor no corresponding admiration for the thriving democracy next door. Hence, on the same day Senator Paul Wellstone held a press conference excoriating China's human rights record, he could turn around and denounce Bush for suggesting a visit to Taiwan. The very idea, Wellstone fretted, "ties into all of the sort of politics [of] China-bashing and trying to rekindle some kind of cold war again."

But the contention that the island's cause is "driven more by the right's long-simmering antipathy toward China than by sound foreign policy goals," as *The American Prospect* put it, is inscrutable. Taiwan isn't a fetish. It's a democracy. And one where American "progressives" would feel quite at home. Last year's presidential elections spelled the end of the Nationalist Party's 50-year reign. In its place the Democratic Progressive Party—and its presidential candidate, Chen Shui-bian—has been turning Taiwan into an Asian Tanglewood. Alongside their support for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, its leaders came to power touting aboriginal rights, anti-nuclear activism, environmentalism, and feminism. For taking precisely those stands, many were beaten and jailed during Taiwan's era of martial law. (Chen's wife, whom he often carries in his arms, was run over and paralyzed, it is widely presumed, by Nationalists.) Indeed, former dissidents from as far away as Poland turned out for Chen's inauguration. Alas, the moral imperative to stand by a fellow democracy hasn't made the slightest impression on Americans still clamoring to avenge the ghost of Owen Lattimore.

For its part, the Bush team claims it isn't listening, but several of its members predict it won't sell Taiwan the Aegis system. The State Department bureaucracy is opposed, and, according to Bush advisers, so is Ambassador to China Joseph Prueher and the Pentagon's Pacific Command. But the sale itself may be beside the point. To begin with, we don't have any Aegis ships to sell to Taiwan, and we won't for the better part of a decade. In fact, all the hot air the China lobby has expended opposing a weapons system that doesn't exist might prove a tactical blunder. It gives the White House an excuse to sell Taipei Kidd-class destroyers, Patriot missiles, anti-submarine systems, and other weapons that offer an immediate defense against Chinese forces. And administration officials say that's exactly what they mean to do.

More important still, the White House plans to bolster America's military relationship with Taipei. For decades U.S. policy has been both to deter China from using force against Taiwan and to prevent Taiwan from doing anything—declaring independence, for example—that might provoke a military response from Beijing. The problem is, it's no longer working. Far from deterring China, the ambiguities of "strategic ambiguity"—which grew even murkier during the Clinton years—seem merely to have emboldened it. The policy, as RAND strategist Abram Shulsky puts it, "pays for its advantages by creating a greater risk of miscalculation." Bush advisers say they recognize its defects and intend to clarify America's deterrent. The claims of the anti-Taiwan chorus notwithstanding, a generous arms package might be a good place to start. ■

Our discriminating Court.

Federal Offense

By JEFFREY ROSEN

LAST WEEK, THE Supreme Court held that a Circuit City employee in California who claimed he had suffered race discrimination couldn't sue the electronics dealer under the state's anti-discrimination law. When he'd applied for the job, the employee had agreed to resolve employment disputes through arbitration. And last week the five conservative justices announced that the Federal Arbitration Act of 1925 requires judges to enforce arbitration agreements even when they conflict with state law. The case may seem like an anomaly: The Court's conservative majority is famous for limiting Congress's power in the name of states' rights. Here it did the opposite, expanding the scope of federal law in a way that curtailed states' rights. The ruling was particularly striking since, as the four liberal justices pointed out, employment contracts are explicitly exempted from the Federal Arbitration Act, which was intended to apply only to disputes arising from commercial and maritime contracts.

But the Circuit City ruling wasn't an anomaly. It was the latest—and clearest—evidence that the Supreme Court's so-called federalism revolution isn't really about states' rights at all. Instead, it's about the determination of the five conservative justices to claim exclusive authority to decide what counts as illegal discrimination in America. If any other governmental body—Congress, a state legislature, or a lower court—comes to a different conclusion, the justices will overturn it. And so in February those five held that state employees couldn't sue for damages when the states violated the Americans with Disabilities Act. The justices didn't think discrimination on the basis of disability was a national problem, so they nullified the clear will of Congress. In December the same five held that the Florida Supreme Court couldn't order a recount in the presidential race. The justices said counting the ballots according to different standards would discriminate against certain voters—or was it certain ballots?—even though the Florida legislature had reached the opposite conclusion, reasoning that different counting standards for different ballots were necessary to *avoid* discrimination. And last year, in striking down the Violence Against Women Act, the Court dismissed Congress's conclusion that the states weren't responding adequately to gender-motivated violence—treating Congress more like a lower court than an equal branch of government. These cases show that what's at stake in the Court's recent acts of self-

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aggrandizement is not simply the New Deal legacy of a powerful federal government. What's at stake, even more importantly, is the legacy of the civil rights era and the idea that democratically elected bodies, rather than unelected judges, should have the main responsibility for determining what constitutes illegal discrimination in America.

THESE DAYS, THERE'S not much political support for the proposition that Congress lacks the power to prohibit private business from discriminating on the basis of gender, disability, or anything else. But a generation ago it was a different story. In 1963 Robert Bork argued in this magazine that the 1964 Civil Rights Act was unconstitutional because outlawing discrimination by motels and other privately owned spaces of public accommodation violated the free-assembly rights of racist businessmen. "The danger is that justifiable abhorrence of racial discrimination will result in legislation by which the morals of the majority are self-righteously imposed upon a minority," Bork wrote in a burst of youthful libertarianism. But, even then, Bork's was a minority view: In 1964 the Supreme Court unanimously rejected his reasoning and upheld the public-accommodations provisions of the Civil Rights Act. The justices reasoned that Congress, which has the constitutional authority to regulate interstate commerce, could plausibly conclude that racial discrimination by motel owners might affect interstate commerce.

For the next 30 years the Court interpreted Congress's power under the commerce clause very broadly, refusing to invoke its limits to strike down a single federal law. But in 1995, in the opening shot of the federalism revolution, a 5-4 conservative majority struck down the Gun-Free School Zones Act, reasoning that the connection between guns in schools and interstate commerce was too tenuous to pass constitutional muster. And last year, in striking down the Violence Against Women Act, the Court held that Congress couldn't use its commerce power to regulate noneconomic activities—such as violence—that didn't clearly affect interstate commerce.

These judicial efforts to adapt eighteenth-century limits on Congress's power to the twenty-first century might be viewed as a creative return to the pre-New Deal era—when most people agreed that Congress could pass laws regulating economic, but not social and moral, behavior. But they're also part of a more radical and far less defensible project: to usurp Congress's right to define illegal discrimination. The Fourteenth Amendment, passed in 1868, was intended to give Congress, rather than the courts, primary responsibility for enforcing equal protection of the laws. And when Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act in 1994, it reviewed what the Court later acknowledged was "voluminous" evidence that state courts and prosecutors were refusing to respond adequately to violence against women. But in striking down the law last year, the Court summarily dismissed Congress's conclusions. In parts of their opinion, the five conservatives came close to resurrecting Bork's view that Congress lacks the power to regulate discrimination by private parties—except in cases where Congress is responding to acts of discrimination that the Court itself views as unconstitutional. The five conservatives extended this view in another case last year when they held that states can't be sued for violating federal laws prohibiting age discrimination. Because the Court doesn't view age discrimination as a problem deserving heightened constitutional scrutiny, it prevented Congress from reaching a contrary conclusion.

This lack of deference to Congress is indefensible under any definition of judicial restraint. Unlike its efforts limiting Congress's power to regulate the economy, the Court has no authority to reserve for itself exclusive power to define illegal discrimination. As Alexis de Tocqueville recognized, ideas about what kinds of discrimination should be illegal change dramatically in response to the inexorable logic of democracy. As society becomes more democratic, public pressure to forbid discrimination becomes harder for politicians to resist. This is why, over the past two decades, Congress has decided that more and more forms of discrimination should be illegal—adding discrimination on the basis of age and disability to a list that originally included only race and gender. You may not like the expansion of anti-discrimination law into every corner of American life—my own view is that it fulfills Tocqueville's fears about the soft despotism of the nanny state—but there is no doubt that Congress is better equipped than the Court to represent the people's will.

Indeed, if the Court had taken a similarly self-aggrandizing view of its exclusive power to define discrimination a generation ago, it might have struck down Congress's decision in 1972 to extend federal prohibitions on gender discrimination to the states. And if it continues to take this view, it may prevent a future Congress from requiring the states to pay damages when they discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. But when it comes to recognizing new forms of discrimination, the Court has historically followed Congress. For the Court to prevent Congress from responding to changing social understandings is as great an affront to democracy as any episode of judicial activism ventured by the Warren Court.

THE BEST RESPONSE to charges that the Rehnquist Court is engaging in unprincipled conservative judicial activism came from Chief Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III of the U.S. Court of Appeals in Virginia, at a lecture at the American Enterprise Institute in March. Wilkinson, one of the most thoughtful and nuanced conservative judges, argued that the Rehnquist Court, unlike the Warren and Burger Courts, is acting not as an ideological combatant but as a "structural referee" among the federal government, the states, and the private sector. While the Warren and Burger Courts focused on the extremes of the political spectrum, he said—expanding federal power at one end and individual rights at the other—the Rehnquist Court is correctly protecting the interests of the intermediate organizations—states, local governments, and private groups—that Tocqueville considered necessary to "mediate between the otherwise isolated individual, and the rather awesome and remote array of national institutions."

Wilkinson argues convincingly that as the autonomy of states and civic organizations erodes, society may become "a less stable, less vital, and less nurturing place." But

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ultimately Wilkinson is defending the Rehnquist Court on policy grounds, not constitutional ones. Whether or not you agree that the expansion of anti-discrimination laws lead to social polarization, the Constitution explicitly empowers Congress to enforce the equal protection of the laws, and this includes the power to make empirical judgments about what kind of discrimination requires a national response.

Moreover, despite Wilkinson's provocative defense, the Supreme Court's devotion to the autonomy of states and private organizations is not always consistent or ideologically neutral. Voting-rights cases like *Bush* v. *Gore* and *Shaw* v. *Reno* show that the conservative justices are willing to overrule efforts by state legislatures to redress discrimination when they conflict with the justices' own views of what constitutes discrimination. The Court construes Congress's power narrowly when Congress subjects states to anti-discrimination suits; but, as last week's Circuit City ruling showed, the Court is equally prepared to construe Congress's power broadly when it exempts business from anti-discrimination suits.

If the conservative justices want to protect the autonomy of local organizations without usurping the power of Congress to define discrimination, they should rely not on the Fourteenth Amendment but on the First Amendment. In the Boy Scouts case last year, for example, the Court properly held that the First Amendment protects the right of private organizations like the Boy Scouts to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. And, in a welcome and important opinion last month, Judge Samuel Alito, a federal appellate judge in Philadelphia, held that a public school's anti-sexual-harassment policy violated the First Amendment.

But here, too, some conservative judges have proved inconsistent—willing to discard free speech when it clashes with, rather than supports, big business. For example, the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C., recently upheld the Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act, which extends by 20 years existing copyrights as well as copyrights in the future. The Bono bill was designed as a windfall for the Walt Disney Company, which wants to keep milking profits from Mickey Mouse. A group of lawyers led by Lawrence Lessig of Stanford Law School argued that it violates free speech and Congress's constitutional power to secure copyrights "for limited Times." After extending the terms of existing copyrights eleven times in the past 36 years, Congress now protects copyright for the life of the author plus 70 years—which in the case of Irving Berlin is 171 years. This is more than ten times longer than the initial copyright term endorsed by the first Congress. But two conservative judges on the D.C. appellate court rejected Lessig's argument that the Framers of the Constitution meant to limit terms of copyright because of the powerful public interest in free expression. Judge David Sentelle wrote a powerful dissent, invoking the Supreme Court's federalism decisions and insisting that Congress has no power to grant copyright extensions retroactively. If the conservatives on the Supreme Court refuse to reconsider this decision, they will appear less concerned with imposing principled limitations on Congress's power than with protecting the interests of business above all.

It was precisely this kind of economic partisanship that discredited conservative judicial activism in the past. During the New Deal and Progressive eras, judicial attacks on the power of Congress and the states to regulate the economy prompted FDR to retaliate with his court-packing plan. So far, popular reaction to the Rehnquist Court's imperiousness has been muted, perhaps because the federal laws the Court has struck down so far are largely symbolic. But by asserting an exclusive power to define discrimination, the Court has embarked on a battle it is likely, over the long term, to lose. In a democracy, discrimination is the greatest sin; not even Republican politicians will be able to resist pressure to forbid it in all its forms. During the previous Bush administration, for example, when the Court reduced the scope of federal discrimination laws, Congress promptly overruled the justices with the Civil Rights Act of 1991. Now the Court has grown even more arrogant, insisting that Congress lacks the constitutional power to define discrimination more broadly than the Court. The only way for Congress to defend its prerogatives is to ensure that future justices take a more deferential view of Congress's power and a more modest view of their own. ■

John Edwards and the politics of culture.

South Central

By JASON ZENGERLE

GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

GUILFORD COUNTY COMMISSIONER Mary Rakestraw is what, in the South, they call a rock-ribbed Republican. She loves George W. Bush and Jesse Helms; she hates Bill Clinton and Al Gore. She thinks any politician who's against Bush's tax cut is out to steal what is, after all, "the people's money." As for the folks who opposed John Ashcroft's nomination as attorney general, she's convinced they were "trying to use his religion against him."

So when North Carolina's Democratic Senator John Edwards—fresh from his recent vote against Ashcroft and in the middle of his attacks on Bush's tax plan—showed up here in early February for a quick meet-and-greet with local politicos, you'd think Rakestraw might have been less than welcoming. Instead, she acted as if Valentine's Day had come

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early. Wearing a bright powder-blue vest festooned with little Tarheels insignia (in honor of the University of North Carolina), Rakestraw rushed to present Edwards with a heart-shaped box of chocolates. "Now, Senator," she cooed as she pressed the box into his hands, "whenever you disagree with my party, I want you to eat one of these—so your words are nice and sweet." When one of Rakestraw's colleagues gave her a little good-natured grief for abandoning her party's principles, she shot back, "Well, you would, too, if you were talking to *People* magazine's sexiest man in America," and returned to fussing over the senator.

She hasn't been the only one. Indeed, ever since Edwards, a political novice, knocked off hog-farmer-turned-conservative-icon Lauch Faircloth in 1998—the first time a Democrat had beaten an incumbent Republican senator in the South since 1986—he's been hailed as a comer. "When you walk into town a pig killer," says Sam Popkin, a Democratic pollster and political science professor, "you're a hero." Sure enough, only a few weeks into Edwards's Senate career, Minority Leader Tom Daschle tapped him to be one of three Democratic senators to preside over the depositions taken during Clinton's impeachment trial. Last year, Daschle deputized Edwards to negotiate for the Democrats with John McCain over bipartisan patient-protection legislation—hence the McCain-Edwards bill currently pending on the Hill. And last summer, of course, Edwards placed second to Joe Lieberman in Gore's veepstakes: Were it not for the fact that Edwards had a mere year and a half of government experience at the time, some Gore insiders said, he would have been the pick, hands down.

Now, in the wake of Gore's defeat, the fussing has reached a fever pitch, with Edwards widely touted as a 2004 presidential candidate. Granted, any Democratic politician worth his or her salt is on someone's White House list this early on, but the buzz around Edwards, whom *Time* magazine recently dubbed "The Democrats' New Golden Boy," is particularly intense. "A real thoroughbred. He's got the touch," James Carville has said. William Safire picked him as the "most likely challenger to Al Gore for the 2004 Democratic nomination." Some Democratic operatives go so far as to describe Edwards as a "once-in-a-generation" political talent—which presumably means they consider him more gifted than even Clinton, given that Edwards, at 47, is only seven years younger than the former president.

That observers as ideologically different as Rakestraw and Carville swoon over Edwards says something important about his appeal: It's non-ideological. Rather, Edwards's popularity is based almost entirely on personal traits: his communication skills, his charisma, his biography. And that popularity, in turn, says something important about today's Democratic Party. It wasn't long ago that Democrats chose presidential (and vice presidential) candidates from the South because Southern Democrats possessed ideological attributes that other Democrats lacked: Namely, Southern Democrats were centrists. "Operating in an electorate composed of whites and blacks, liberals, moderates, and conservatives," the political scientists Earl and Merle Black wrote in their 1992 book, *The Vital South*, "[Southern] Democratic politicians had learned how to mix their issue positions to draw support from a broad, biracial spectrum of voters." Not only were Southern moderates like Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton able to pick up crucial electoral votes in the South—with Carter winning ten of the eleven Southern states in 1976 and Clinton winning four in 1992 and 1996—their centrism was a boon in parts of the Midwest and West as well.

Today, however, Southern Democrats are less ideologically distinct. After eight years of Clinton, the party is relatively homogenous. Whether it's being tough on crime and welfare or preferring debt reduction to ambitious new spending, almost any Democrat with presidential ambitions—even those from the Northeast, like Connecticut's Lieberman or Massachusetts's John Kerry—practices a brand of politics once considered distinctly Southern. They're all centrists now. But that centrism doesn't necessarily translate into Southern votes: Just look at Gore's zero-for-eleven performance in Southern states last November. And as Gore's defeat—and Carter's and Clinton's victories—demonstrates, the Democrats can't win the White House without picking up electoral votes below the Mason-Dixon line.

So today the Democrats' troubles in the South are less ideological than cultural. "Even though Gore's from Tennessee and he's a centrist, people here didn't think he was a real

ROB BARBONI

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Southerner, and they just weren't comfortable with him," says one Southern Democratic strategist, explaining why Gore fared so poorly in the region. "He'd been in Washington so long he had no Southern authenticity. Even his accent and his cadence didn't sound right." In other words, Gore's problem wasn't what he was saying, it was how he was saying it—for whatever reason, Southerners don't trust moderate rhetoric unless it comes with a regional twang. That's why some Democrats are less focused on adjusting their message for 2004 than on finding a good messenger—preferably one with a convincing Southern accent. Enter John Edwards.

COMMENTING ON THE "Southern fondness for rhetoric" in his 1941 classic, *The Mind of the South*, W. J. Cash wrote: "A gorgeous, primitive art, addressed to the autonomic system and not to the encephalon, rhetoric is of course dear to the heart of the simple man everywhere.... But in the South ... rhetoric flourished ... far beyond even its American average; it early became a passion—and not only a passion but a primary standard of judgment, the *sine qua non* of leadership. The greatest man would be the man who could best wield it."

On a February morning in Greensboro, Edwards is wielding it in a hotel ballroom filled with furniture-manufacturing executives. But Edwards's rhetoric is different from the kind Cash described. Unlike Southern orator-demagogues like Pitchfork Ben Tillman and Huey Long, Edwards isn't trying to bypass his listeners' brains to communicate directly with their "autonomic systems." He doesn't yell. He doesn't pound his fists. He doesn't even reach for particularly lyrical phrases. Instead, he walks his audience through a very methodical briefing on what's happening on Capitol Hill—from Bush's tax cut to his own patients' bill of rights legislation to campaign finance reform—and offers his views on where things should go.

Standing behind a podium and wearing a standard-issue blue suit, Edwards projects the casual "just folks" demeanor so many politicians try (and usually fail) to achieve by donning khakis and strapping on a wireless microphone. Part of it is his looks—a boyish face and foppish brown hair that, while not enough to earn him the title of *People*'s sexiest *man*, did make him the magazine's sexiest *politician*. Part of it is his accent—a syrupy Southern drawl that reflects his roots in the small North Carolina mill town of Robbins. But the most important part is Edwards's ability to take complex, even boring policy issues and present them in ways that are familiar but not trivial—to engage his audience without condescending to it. It's a subtle oratorical gift. Clinton, though never an inspirational speech-giver, has it; Gore does not.

"For those of you who have something else in your life to think about other than the rules of the Senate ...," Edwards says self-deprecatingly before launching into an explanation of the filibuster. Describing the need for campaign finance reform, he is appealingly matter-of-fact: "If you saw how much time senators, including this one, have to spend raising money, if you saw how every senator has a little office just off Capitol Hill where they go to make fund-raising phone calls because they can't do it from government property, you'd see how important reform is." By the time Edwards is finished, the furniture manufacturers are hooked. They besiege the senator with questions, not about the narrow concerns of the furniture industry but about taxes, education, and campaign finance. They seem excited and grateful that someone is there to explain the issues to them.

Edwards's speaking style is just as effective in Washington. His speech during the closing proceedings of Clinton's impeachment trial, in which he explained why he was voting to acquit, was hailed even by Republicans such as Oregon Senator Gordon Smith as "brilliant." Later that year, during a health care debate, Vermont Republican James Jeffords yielded the floor to Edwards, who proceeded to decimate Jeffords's arguments so thoroughly that another Republican senator, according to *Roll Call*, was overheard saying, "I got a rule: Never yield to John Edwards." "He has the potential," Vermont Democrat Patrick Leahy has said, "to be the best debater the Senate has seen in twenty-five years."

EDWARDS'S ORATORICAL STYLE likely stems from his legal training—particularly in the courtroom. As a trial lawyer in Raleigh, Edwards specialized in high-profile personal-injury lawsuits. Going after corporations, hospitals, and insurance companies on behalf of grievously injured clients—such as a nine-year-old girl whose intestines were sucked out by a pool drain—Edwards secured verdicts and settlements of upwards of $150 million in the 1990s alone. He became a legend in North Carolina legal circles: Fellow lawyers would crowd into courtrooms to watch him in action. And while he never quite achieved the national fame (or infamy) of fellow Southerner Dickie Scruggs—the Mississippi trial lawyer whose fight against big tobacco was memorialized in *The Insider*—Edwards was successful enough to earn membership in the Inner Circle of Advocates, a group of the 100 most successful lawyers in the country.

While Edwards was displaying his legal talents and polishing his rhetorical skills, however, he wasn't paying much attention to politics. In the 13 elections prior to his own 1998 race, he voted in only seven. Equally telling for a man of his wealth—Edwards's fortune from his legal work was estimated in 1998 at between $13 million and $30 million—his political contributions totaled only about $30,000, with much of that going to judicial candidates. (When it came time for *his* Senate race, Edwards spent $6 million of his own money.) It wasn't until after his 16-year-old son Wade died in a car accident in 1996, Edwards's friends have said, that he decided to run for office. Edwards, who still wears his son's Outward Bound pin on his lapel, is reluctant to talk about the impact of his death, but it was clearly profound. Not only did he give up his law practice and run for office, but he and his 51-year-old wife, Elizabeth, have had two more children since Wade's death.

While Edwards was ignoring politics, of course, Southern Democrats such as Clinton and Gore were remaking the national party in their centrist image. So much so, in fact, that by the time Edwards ran for the Senate, his Southern centrism didn't really set him apart. The issues he ran on—reducing class size in public schools, protecting Social Secu-

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rity, curtailing the power of HMOs—were the issues Democratic candidates were championing all over the country. Even Edwards's support for the death penalty placed him squarely within the Democratic mainstream.

In fact, if anything distinguishes Edwards's centrism, it is its relative squishiness: Having slept through the intra-party battles of the 1990s, Edwards, in contrast to many other Democratic centrists, doesn't view himself as an ideological warrior. He is a member of the New Democrat Coalition, but he wears the New Democrat tag only when it suits his purposes. So avowed is his neutrality, in fact, that when the centrist Democratic Leadership Council's Al From and liberal journalist Bob Kuttner were invited to debate the reasons for Gore's loss at a Democratic retreat in January, Edwards was chosen to moderate. "I think what matters to voters is not where you position yourself on the political spectrum," Edwards says. "That's something that other people are sometimes concerned about, but I don't think voters are."

WHAT DOES MATTER to voters, Edwards has demonstrated, is positioning on the lifestyle spectrum. Ever since he entered politics, Edwards's mantra has been that he is a "mainstream North Carolinian." In presenting himself as an everyman, Edwards is, again, following in a long Southern tradition—stretching from Ben Tillman to Huey Long to George Wallace to Bill Clinton. Clinton, for example, may have been a Rhodes scholar and a Yale Law School graduate, but neither Oxford nor New Haven was his psychic home; Hope was. And if he ate too much fast food and chased too many women, well, that was just part of his roguish, backwoods charm.

But here, again, Edwards has given the Southern tradition a new twist. His everyman is no bubba; he's an unrepentant yuppie. On the day I spent traveling with Edwards to constituent events around Greensboro, he had his staff put a one-hour window in his schedule—and line up a supporter's apartment where he could change and shower—so he could go running. When his press secretary, Mike Briggs, who hails from California, asked Edwards about a popular local restaurant chain called Biscuitville, the senator was aghast. "Take any food that's normally three hundred calories," he told his aide. "At Biscuitville it's a thousand." He's not even afraid of the elitist, Ivy League stigma that terrifies other Democrats: Talking to one audience about education, Edwards boasted that his oldest daughter, who just graduated from a Raleigh public school last spring, is now a freshman at Princeton.

Indeed, while Edwards makes sure to mention his humble origins—as the son of a mill worker who grew up in Robbins—he spends more time talking about how far he has come. And it works because there are tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of North Carolinians whose life trajectories mirror his. The state's economic shift from textiles, tobacco, and furniture manufacturing to research and development and financial services has created a whole class of white-collar, "New South" professionals—a group that, in Democratic consultant Mac McCorkle's estimation, is becoming a key swing-voting bloc in North Carolina.

The shift has been so pronounced that, by 1998, an upwardly mobile striver like Edwards seemed as representative of the state as a hog farmer like Lauch Faircloth. "The everyman in the South these days is the nurse in Raleigh or the insurance agent in Montgomery," says Ferrel Guillory, the director of the University of North Carolina's Program on Southern Politics, Media, and Public Life. "It isn't necessarily the farmer with the red neck or the guy working under the hood." Or, as Gary Pearce, a North Carolina Democratic strategist who worked on the Edwards campaign, puts it, "I think a lot of people in this state looked at [Edwards] and said, 'Gee, he's just like me.'"

PRESIDENTIAL BUZZ NOTWITHSTANDING, Edwards is still a political rookie—a fact that was hard not to notice the day we drove around Greensboro. While most politicians, with a reporter's questions and the passing scenery putting them in a reminiscent mood, would tell political war stories, Edwards didn't—mainly because he doesn't have any. Instead, Edwards kept up a near-constant patter about the law. When we passed a sole practitioner's shingle hanging alongside a strip-mall-cluttered road, Edwards exclaimed, "I know that guy, tried a case with him once," before recounting the case's details. A stop at the Greensboro courthouse for a political reception prompted a round of tales about courtroom battles waged on the premises. "I know lawyers all across North Carolina," Edwards boasted at one point.

But there was one legal war story that Edwards brought up seemingly apropos of nothing. It was about a rare instance in which he'd actually worked for the defense, representing a newspaper in the beach town of Wilmington, North Carolina, called *The Morning Star*, which was being sued for libel. On one level, the story may have been little more than an attempt to ingratiate himself with a journalist by showing his devotion to freedom of the press. But, on another level, Edwards's tale revealed a good deal about how he views politics and about his own ambitions. Because it seems that, in Edwards's mind and in the minds of many of his fellow Democrats, the party's vexing problems in the South are less about policy than about style. And the solution to those problems, therefore, is as simple, and as complex, as finding someone who can deliver the party's message in an authentically Southern voice.

The *Star*, Edwards explained, was owned by *The New York Times*, and the plaintiff, knowing the *Times*' less-than-sterling reputation in Southern towns, had named the Gray Lady in the suit as well. And so the *Times* had sent down its own lawyers, who promptly set about trying to take over the case. "They were saying," Edwards recounted, approximating what I assumed to be a flat Northeastern accent, "'We're going to do this, and we're going to do that.'" Their legal arguments were fine, but Edwards recognized that having a bunch of Yankee lawyers deliver them to the jury was exactly what the *Star* didn't need. So Edwards intervened. "I told them," he recalled, returning to his own Southern accent, "'The first thing you can do is just sit there and be quiet. Let me do the talking.'"

And did you win? I asked.

"Oh yes." ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Out to Kill

A FILM CALLED *Stalingrad* arrived here in 1995, two years after its premiere in Germany, where it had been made. Co-written and directed and photographed by Joseph Vilsmaier, it chilled and gripped for the most part. Vilsmaier unrolled before us the slaughter by the Germans that was in time turned back on them. The battle of Stalingrad—six months in 1942–1943—was one of the bloodiest in history. It ended in complete German defeat by the Soviet forces, who stood firm at the Volga, simply refusing to buckle under incessant land and air attacks, and who, after hundreds of thousands of casualties, forced the Germans to surrender.

Quite apart from this film's quality, which was high, its existence was an amazement. Predictably, it had caused an uproar in Germany. Why had Germans made a film about the turning point that led ultimately to their defeat in World War II? To an American viewer, the only perceptible reasons seemed to be one more exposure of Hitler's heartless insanity (he wanted his armies to fight to the very last man) and one more scalding testimony of war's hell.

Now, even more incomprehensibly, the Germans have financed a second film about Stalingrad, have helped with data and supplies, and, this time, have permitted the film to be made in their own country. *Stalingrad* had been shot in Czechoslovakia. **Enemy at the Gates** (Paramount) was shot in Brandenburg. Further, it was written by two Frenchmen, Alain Godard and Jean-Jacques Annaud, with Annaud directing. And to cap the oddity of the enterprise, the screenplay reduces this historic agony to a background for a love story and a cinematic shoot-out. *Enemy at the Gates* makes one hope fervently that there is no afterlife: the possibility that any victim of Stalingrad, either Russian or German, could see this film from above—or below—would be an added horror.

Enemy at the Gates is based on true events. (What film isn't these days?) Once again I relish the word "based" in that claim. It allows the film-makers to soar—from a factual base—into Movieland. Apparently there actually was in the Soviet army at Stalingrad a sharpshooter named Vassili who was effective against the Germans. But whether he had the Shelleyan profile of Jude Law, whether he was a rival with a political officer of Joseph Fiennes's sensibility for a woman soldier as beautiful as Rachel Weisz, whether the love of Vassili and the woman was consummated in a large dugout filled with dozens of sleeping soldiers on both sides of them—all these matters it is possible to doubt. The political officer and the woman are Jews, we are told, but the irrelevance of this fact to the story only adds to the film's ideational hollowness. (At the end, as if to free Jews of Bolshie taint, Fiennes denounces communism.)

The plot contrivances and hokum are all the more discomfiting because *Enemy at the Gates* begins with heart-stopping authenticity—troop movements, inhumanly packed freight cars, encampments. Though the film's music under this opening is more grandiose than helpful, Annaud's deployment of huge forces, strengthened by Wolf Kroeger's powerfully grim production design, arouses expectations of an authentic film. But those first sequences turn out to be the truthful wrapping of a fake center.

The worst betrayal of that opening truth is the closing shoot-out. The Germans become irritated with the Soviet sniper who is picking off their officers, so they bring in a sniper of their own (Ed Harris, being staunch) to pick off Vassili. The two men plot their strategies against each other in the ruins of the city; but despite the broken walls and twisted girders surrounding them, their last encounter takes on the flavor of an old-time Western-movie finish. This long, complex picture ends as *Gunfight at the Volga Corral.*

Two others in the cast deserve salutes. Bob Hoskins has a few scenes as Nikita Khrushchev, who was a political officer at Stalingrad. Hoskins, his nose and hairline adjusted, looks remarkably like the Russian, and his performance has the touch of the clownish that always seemed to underlie Khrushchev's appearances. The gifted German actress Eva Mattes appears, too briefly, as a Soviet mother. The probability that Mattes was dubbed in English reminds us that this film carries on a venerable film paradox. All the actors speak in English; but the newspapers that Soviet soldiers pick up are in Russian, as are the signs on the walls behind them.

Medical schools of the future may be stocked with fiction films. Numerous screen and television writers apparently pore over medical textbooks and journals for exploitable mental afflictions. Necrophilia, kleptomania, whatever—a full range of neuroses has turned up in pictures through the decades, as if screenwriters had been drooling for the chance to utilize them. And now, medical students to come, Christopher Nolan has dramatized still another mental condition for you. In **Memento** (Newmarket) Nolan has come up with anterograde amnesia.

This disorder is the result of a trauma that separates a person's past from his present. He (or she) can remember everything before the trauma but cannot retain memories of anything that happens afterward. If there is a divinity somewhere that devises these illnesses, Nolan must be burning incense at his shrine.

Leonard Shelby—played by Guy Pearce, an actor whose body and face look as if he had been machined on a lathe—is an insurance investigator. One night he wakes to find that his wife is not beside him. He hears sounds from the bathroom, goes in, and finds his wife, wrapped in plastic, being attacked. Trying to rescue her, he gets a tremendous whack on the head.

Shelby can remember everything before that whack, including the fact that his wife was raped and murdered, but he cannot remember anything that happens to him subsequently. He has to make notes—including tattoos on his body—and take Polaroid photos to remember whom he meets and where he is. He can keep in his mind only one post-trauma thing: he wants to find and to kill the man or men responsible for his wife's defilement and death.

This, however, is not where the film begins: it starts at the end and then moves backward. The story doesn't run continuously backward, like a videotape being rewound. Nolan's screenplay is written in conventional scenes, except that scene 12 is followed by scene 11, and so on.

The comparison that comes immediately to mind is Harold Pinter's play—and film—*Betrayal,* which begins with the re-encounter of a man and woman who had been lovers, and ends with the start

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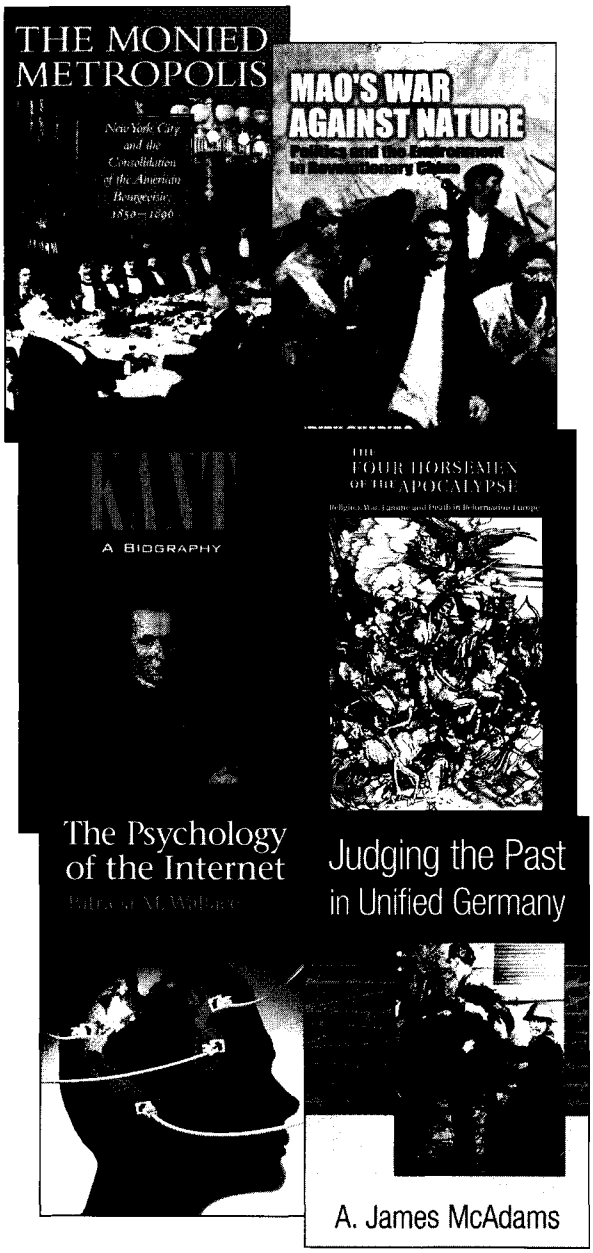

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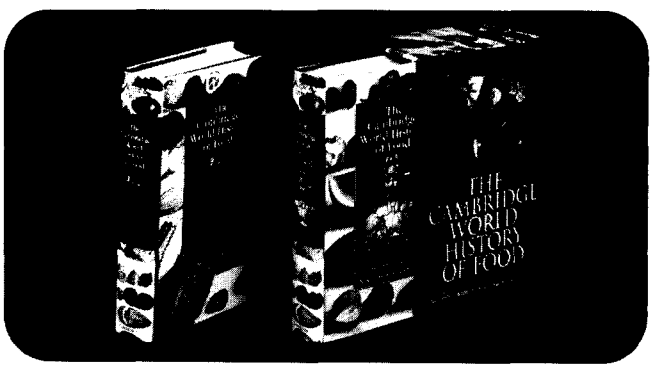

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of the affair some years earlier. But this comparison doesn't do Nolan much good: the similarity is only structural. Pinter was concerned with the devolution of emotion, the interplay of knowledges, the metamorphosis of character—all of them approached in reverse chronological order for the purpose of further insight. Nolan uses the structure simply as a gimmick to refresh a stale story of revenge, crime, sex, a film *noir* that never gets any darker than *gris*. The characters are so commonplace, the action so familiar, that we very soon wish that *Memento* itself could be shown backward—therefore chronologically forward. At least this would reduce the pretensions of a stock item whose only novelty is its medical "discovery." ■

Robert Brustein on Theater

The Aesthetics of Violence

THE THEATRE FOR a New Audience, which doesn't have a home of its own, has been housing a new revival of Edward Bond's **Saved** at the American Place Theatre in New York. A warning sign in the theater lobby reads: "*Saved* contains scenes of explicit violence and cigarette smoking." What next? Printed cautions about the non-organic candy at the refreshment counter? When people are so sensitive to the environment that smoking gets equal billing with murder, one almost wonders which of these liberal middle-class interdictions is going to upset the audience more.

Well, not really. Some spectators may leave the theater grumbling about second-hand smoke, but it is unquestionably the infamous stoning of a baby in its carriage that shocks some members of this audience out of their seats after the first-act curtain, propelling them, coats in hand, towards the nearest available exit. Europeans like to accuse Americans of having a violent culture. They are right, of course; but when it comes to violence onstage, no one can beat the English. Just consider the way Lavinia loses her arms, tongue, and virginity in *Titus Andronicus*, or how Gloucester's eyes are gouged out in *King Lear*. But the onstage murder of the baby in *Saved* may very well be the single most disturbing moment in all of world drama—that is, until Sarah Kane, a disciple of Bond's, wrote *Blasted*, which includes an episode about the eating of a baby.

If these scenes of violence were purely gratuitous, people would be right to walk out. But both scenes are crucial to the plays in which they occur, and they are written with a kind of remorseless, ferocious honesty that sanctions the horror of their content. What I mean is that the playwrights pay a price for their Grand Guignol (indeed, Kane committed suicide a few years after writing her first play). Those who abandoned *Saved* at intermission missed the powerful conclusion of an extraordinary work that is possibly Bond's masterpiece, and that is certainly among the most potent English dramas of the century—though a culture that enshrines the intellectual exercises of Tom Stoppard may not be quite ready to recognize this fact.

Saved caused a scandal in 1965, when it was first produced; it was the last play to be banned by the Lord Chamberlain. Since it has now been rescued from purblind criticism by the judgment of history, reviewers have been casting around for some other explanation for their feelings of discomfort. A few have chosen to blame the current production, saying it lacks emotional warmth and humanity. I am not sure that it would be possible to find much warmth or humanity in the play. I saw the original *Saved* in London, and I supervised the American premiere at Yale in 1968. This version, as directed by Robert Woodruff, is distinguished by a stubborn and obviously thankless integrity. It is by far the version most faithful to the intentions of the author (who, I understand, was in attendance during much of the rehearsal period).

This production makes no concessions to the pleasure principle. Woodruff has created a dry, monochromatic shell of an evening that envelops the play like the coating on a strychnine pill. We witness the cruelty and the suffering of these characters without ever being allowed to identify with them. In this Bond is a true disciple of Brecht, who wanted us to work to change the conditions of oppression rather than just weep over the fate of the oppressed. And Bond also shares Brecht's belief that it is the social organism rather than the individual heart that is to blame for human cruelty. ("The cause and solution of the problem of human violence," he wrote in 1977, "lie not in our instincts but in our social relationships.")

Luckily, Bond does not try to prove this debatable Rousseauian principle in his play. *Saved* does not have a didactic bone in its body. Instead we are permitted to watch, as if under a bell jar, selected members of the underclass in the performance of their workaday rituals. Consecutive speech being pretty rare among these people, most of the rituals are physical. The very first action is a laconic sexual act between Len, a good-natured young bloke, and Pam, a loose and rather flinty young woman, in the kitchen of her house. Her father, Harry, walks in on the two as they are about to have intercourse, but that does not seem to matter much to Dad. There isn't a lot of erotic charge in the encounter anyway.

After the setting moves to a boatyard (all set changes are made in full view by four burly stagehands), we learn that Pam is pregnant—not by Len. The child's father, Fred (also known as Skip), is a sullen hoodlum in a leather coat who hangs around with even more threatening hoods. Other than fighting and murdering, they don't seem to know what to do with their time. Like the loungers in Fellini's *I Vitelloni*, they make an art of idleness and anomie.

After Pam gives birth, Len moves into the house. But no one, not even the sympathetic Len, seems interested in comforting the crying baby. Pam copulates with Fred in full view of her parents, and in full view of Len, with the door open and the lights on. Like Fred, she is driven only by her appetites—by what Iago called "a lust of the blood and a permission of the will." And when Pam has left the scene (and the baby carriage) in order to punish Fred, his mates systematically torture and kill the infant—hitting it with their fists, rubbing its face in its own vomit, and finally hurling stones at it. (Fred joins in the murder, muttering, "The kid ain't mine.") The shock of the audience is palpable—cries and whimpers alternating with angry protests.

Fred serves a few months in the slammer on manslaughter charges, and the

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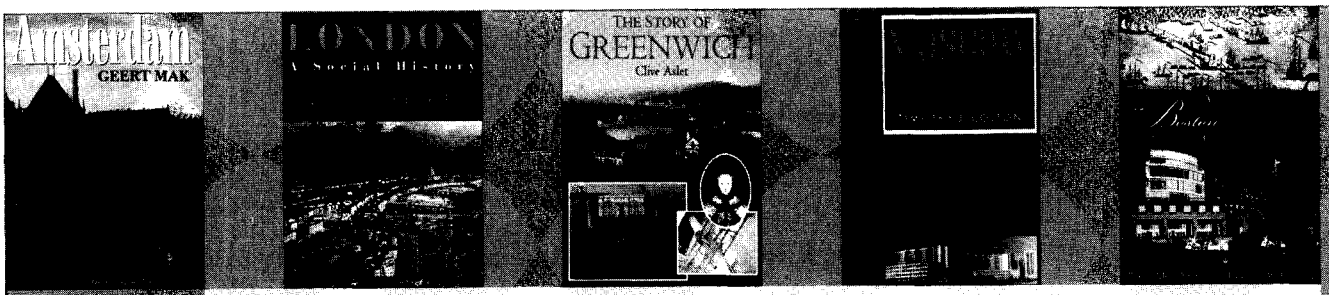

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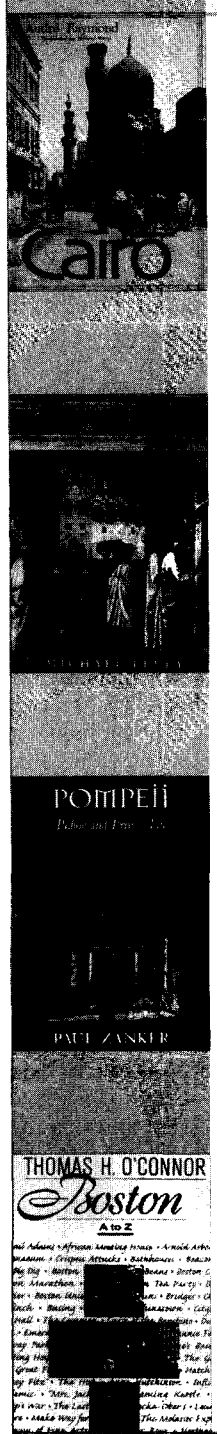

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worst perpetrators get off scot-free. Pam's family seems to take the infanticide in stride, though her mother, Mary, blames her daughter for not looking after her kid. In a highly flirtatious scene, Mary asks Len to repair a run in her stocking, accompanying his efforts with suggestive double entendres ("You'll make it bigger, not smaller"; "Bite it"; and so on). In the middle of this encounter, her husband Harry walks in and, as in the first interrupted sex scene between Len and his daughter, walks right out again.

When Fred returns from jail, he is unable to describe what it was like "inside," or how it felt to kill a baby ("I forget"). His blank inarticulacy and his frozen feelings are shared by most of the characters in the play. Eventually Fred leaves, and the distraught Pam tries to get rid of Len, too, despite his ineffective protests ("I'm the only one who stays, and you want me to leave?"). While he is packing his case, Harry comes in. Len assures him that "I never put a finger on your old woman," and, after a few moments of mumbled semi-communication, Harry asks him to stay. It is the only moment in which something resembling "human" feeling can be discerned—indeed, it is the closest Bond comes in this play to creating a genuine love scene.

At the end, Pam is reading her *Radio Times*, Mary is cleaning up, Harry is working, and Len is fixing a chair. No human voices are heard, only the sounds and scratches of everyday life masking the evidence of human misery. (We are reminded of the final moments of *Uncle Vanya*.) Bond's title is largely ironic. But it is in these final inchoate moments, if it is anywhere in this bleak, relentless brute of a play, that some sort of speechless salvation may be happening.

The acting, under Woodruff's firm if understated direction, is splendid—especially Amy Ryan's stertorous, hard-nosed Pam, Randy Danson's worn-out yet vaguely nurturing Mary, Norbert Butz's mercurial Fred, Pete Starrett's long-suffering Len, and the somnolent Harry of Terence Rigby (a fine English actor who has been faulted for not having a convincing English accent). Douglas Stein has contributed a simple set that, with the aid of a curtain, manages to change shape and dimension scene by scene, as does this brave, unflinching study of daily transactions among the lowest human life-forms.

Two new plays of some quality opened recently—the Roundabout Theatre Company's production of Martin McDonagh's **A Skull in Connemara** at the Gramercy Theatre, and the Lincoln Center Theater production of Jon Robin Baitz's **Ten Unknowns** at the Mitzi E. Newhouse. Of these, the Baitz play is the more sophisticated, and the McDonagh is the more amusing. Each, unfortunately, needs something more than intelligence or laughs.

A Skull in Connemara is the second play in McDonagh's Leenane trilogy (which includes *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* and *The Lonesome West*)—not to be confused with his Aran Islands trilogy (*The Cripple of Inishmaan, The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, and *The Banshees of Inisheer*). Obviously McDonagh likes to do things in threes (as does another Irish writer, Billy Roche, who wrote the Wexford trilogy). With the completion of these six full-length plays, McDonagh has a prodigious output at a very early age.

Much as I admire this playwright, I think he may be writing too much and too fast. With *A Skull in Connemara*, one senses for the first time the presence of formula. I am not referring to the repetition here of the joke in *The Lonesome West* that nobody can be sure whether the local priest is called Father Walsh or Father Welsh (I like running gags). It is, rather, a question of style. McDonagh has always been brilliant at creating a comedy of mayhem, at showing how the light sides and the dark sides of human nature co-exist with each other. But while his characters have previously managed to be savage and engaging at the same time, here their whimsicality tends to make us skeptical of the reality of their violent side. In *A Skull in Connemara*, McDonagh seems to be pulling his punches.

Or maybe his protagonist is, since in this play a character can be brained with a mallet, blood streaming down his shirt, without suffering more than a headache. This is the stylistic privilege of an animated cartoon, the one genre in which violence has no lasting physical consequences. And while *A Skull in Connemara* sometimes asks to be compared with *Hamlet* (the play is one long gravediggers' scene, with dozens of Yoricks getting their skulls smashed into splinters), it is actually closer to *Tom and Jerry*. This is hardly the fault of McDonagh's good actors (Kevin Tighe, Christopher Evan Welch, Christopher Carley, and Zoaunne LeRoy), or of his skillful director (Gordon Edelstein). McDonagh is still a master of dramatic surprise and unexpected reversals. It's just that these techniques are now beginning to look a little tired and mechanical.

Jon Robin Baitz's *Ten Unknowns* is about an aging painter who has been living obscurely in Mexico for the past twenty-eight years and is now about to be rediscovered. The fashion for Action Painting having given way to a new hunger for the

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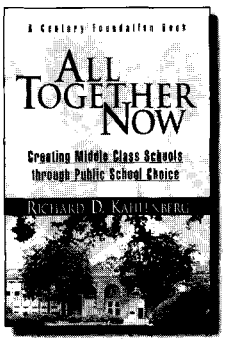

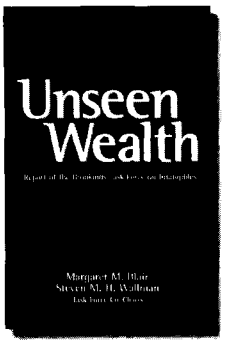

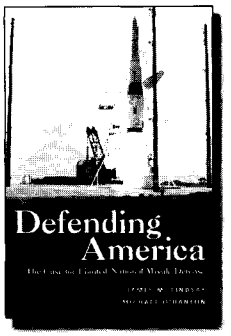

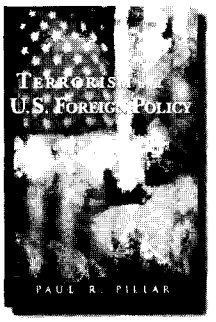

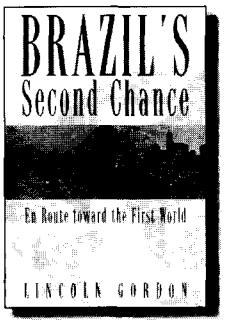

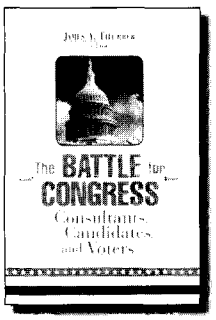

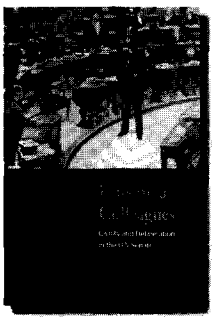

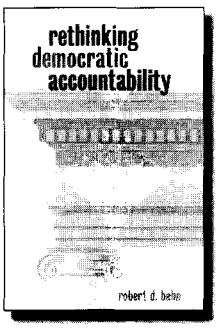

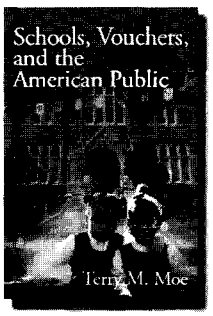

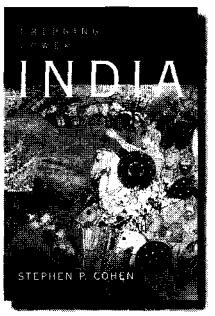

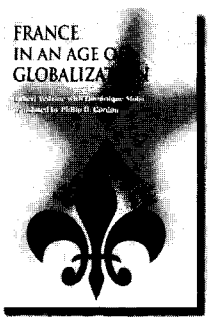

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"authenticity" of late-generation WPA artists, the figurative work of Malcolm Raphelson is coming back into vogue. And with the help of his South Africa-born agent, Trevor, Malcolm is poised to become the darling of the New York salons. The trouble is that Malcolm is not much interested in taking part in fashionable displays such as the Whitney Biennial. With growing frustration, Trevor discovers that he is representing an artist who doesn't want to show, and the bulk of the evening is devoted to gradually revealing why. The main plot involves Malcolm's attraction to a young ecologist named Julia Bryant, who has come to Mexico to study translucent frogs, as well as his difficult relationship with a young assistant, an acerbic pothead named Judd Sturgess.

The big revelation is that Malcolm, in a variant on what is coming to be known as Jerzy Kosinski Syndrome, has been letting Judd do his painting for him. Malcolm excuses this by saying that Diego Rivera had assistants, too (eight in all, and he was one), but that however much Judd may have contributed to the Raphelson myth, all the creative impulses belonged to him. Waking from his narcotic daze, Judd wants acknowledgment for his work, to which Malcolm replies: "All you are is me minus the self." When someone describes Malcolm as an American original, Judd snarls: "Well, he could have been, but he ain't."

Like Baitz's *The Substance of Fire*, which was about an aging, out-of-fashion publisher, *Ten Unknowns* is a literate and informed study of life among the intelligentsia. The play is stuffed with art chat, especially Raphelson's contemptuous screeds against "the mania for the new," and the self-hating art world's surrender to reverse racism. And except for a somewhat superfluous subplot, it moves along smoothly enough. The cast, under Daniel Sullivan's deliberate direction, is engaging and attractive, especially Donald Sutherland, his hair and beard a shock of white flax, wry and bitter as Malcolm; Justin Kirk, playing Judd with the tart intensity of a young Gary Sinese; and Julianna Margulies as Julia, looking and sounding a lot like Amy Brenneman with her dark good looks and sexy, hoarse voice.

So the evening passes pleasantly enough, as time does when people are engaged in intelligent conversation about the arts. But the play needs another draft, and for three reasons. I don't think Baitz has quite completed his thoughts about the commercialization of art, which I take to be his theme. I'm not quite sure what these characters are doing on a stage together. And I don't know why this gifted playwright felt compelled to write this particular play. The kind of urgency that catapulted Bond's *Saved* into our consciousness is not a characteristic of every play-writing generation. ■

The Murder of Memory

By JAROSLAW ANDERS

Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland by Jan T. Gross

(Princeton University Press, 261 pp., $19.95)

I.

POLES OF MY generation, born around 1950, usually remember the moment when they learned of the existence of Jews. In my case, the moment occurred in March 1968, two months before my high school graduation. Students in Warsaw were demonstrating at the universities against censorship and for something that they called "pluralism" (democracy still did not dare to speak its name). The official press described the demonstrations as a "Zionist conspiracy," and it treated its readers daily to the "real"—that is, Jewish-sounding—names of some of the protest leaders, as well as the names of professors and intellectuals who had the temerity to defend them. It was then, during those exhilarating and surreal days, that I discovered that some of my best friends were, indeed, Jews.

Before this, there were no Jews, and certainly no "Zionists," in Poland. There were "people of Jewish origin," or (rather oddly) "Poles of Mosaic faith." The word Jew (*Żyd*) was usually written in lower case, which in Polish suggests a religion, not a nationality. But now Jews were everywhere, mostly in prominent and influential positions—in politics, academia, the arts, and of course the media. And not long afterwards I discovered—along with my friends, including those newly revealed as Jewish—that anti-Semitic sentiments were still running strong in Polish society. Not all the slogans painted on the walls, and not all the insults chalked on the doors of our neighbors, were the work of the secret police.

People who were usually disdainful of the diatribes printed in the official press seemed strangely inclined to believe that communist Poland really was ruled by a "Zionist" cabal, and they even started to express genuine satisfaction that the members of this cabal were being exposed, and removed from their positions, and loudly encouraged to leave Poland and "go to Zion"—all this despite the palpable admiration of Israel's victory over the Soviet-armed Arabs. In the matter of the Jews, the official communist propaganda, usually so ineffective, seemed to have struck a responsive chord.

I discovered also the existence of a peculiar zone of silence surrounding everything that touched upon Polish-Jewish relations, especially during World War II. There were no books on the subject, no serious historical studies, no archives open to researchers. The issue barely existed in postwar Polish literature and art. Of course, there were many other blank spots in the official version of Polish history, but this one seemed different. It encompassed not only officially sanctioned speech, but also private conversations with parents, neighbors, and trusted older friends. Even people known for their intellectual honesty and moral courage seemed to speak about these matters reluctantly; and their awkwardness suggested that they lacked the proper language to express things that they must have known from their own experience.

At school the subject was treated with a peculiar hastiness, without the usual discussion points and extra-curricular reading lists. We knew only that during the war Poles often helped Jews, despite the fact that such acts were punishable by death—not only for the person directly involved, but also often for that person's entire family, household, or village. We were taken on school trips to Auschwitz, where we were shown the nightmarish heaps of clothes, shoes, eyeglasses, and hair—the tokens of Nazi crimes "against humanity." Yet the list of nationalities that perished in the ovens did not include

JAROSLAW ANDERS is a Polish writer living in Washington, D.C. He writes frequently on Eastern European subjects.

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"Jews," and "Poland" had the largest number printed next to its name. Some of those Poles, we were told, were probably Jews. Did we really need to know how many? It was all in the past. Why stir up unpleasant memories or bother oneself with such details?

II.

SINCE THAT TIME, much has changed in Poland's approach to its Jewish past. There is genuine interest, especially among the younger generations, in Jewish culture, Jewish religion, and Jewish thought. There are Judaica sections in Polish bookstores, and films and cultural events featuring Jewish subjects are followed with considerable interest, and it is almost a point of honor to be invited by one's Jewish friends to a Hanukkah meal or a "real" Jewish wedding. And yet there are still precincts of Polish collective memory in which facts are distorted, hushed up, or simply repressed. The achievement of this powerful new book by Jan T. Gross—a veteran of the 1968 student demonstrations in Poland—is that it makes it impossible any longer to avoid looking into the forbidden zone.

Neighbors describes an atrocity committed sixty years ago that at first shocks with its familiarity. On July 10, 1941, soon after the German invasion, Jews from a little town in eastern Poland, all 1,600 of them, were dragged from their homes, humiliated, tortured, and then executed—burned alive in the barn of a local peasant. A horrifying crime, no doubt; and yet a mere footnote to what we know today about the Holocaust. But not quite a footnote, perhaps. For this particular anti-Jewish atrocity in wartime Poland was different: these murders were perpetrated not by a German *Einsatzgruppe*, but by a mob of Polish civilians.

The Jews of Jedwabne, a village some 40 miles west of Bialystok, were murdered by their Polish neighbors. Those neighbors turned almost overnight into very willing, and unspeakably brutal, executioners. And until now the participation of Poles in this massacre has been denied: even a memorial plaque erected in Jedwabne in 1962 blamed the destruction of the town's Jewish population on the Gestapo and German police units. (During the furor that followed the publication of *Neighbors* in Poland about a year ago, the plaque was removed.)

What really happened in Jedwabne, as indicated by the documents unearthed by Gross, has deep and tangled roots that, like almost everything that touches upon Polish-Jewish relations, reach centuries back. For practical reasons, one

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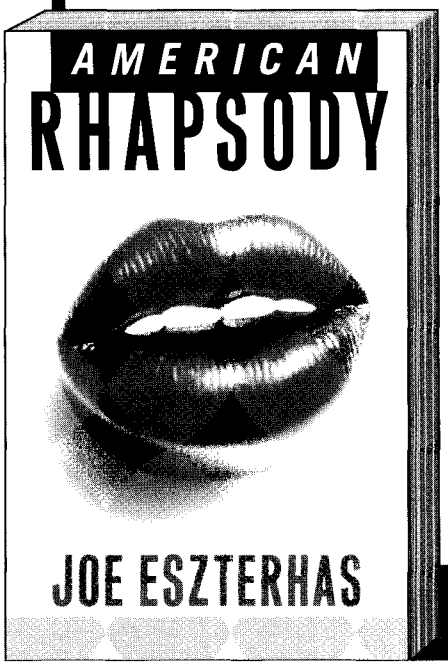

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may begin the historical explanation with the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, signed on the eve of World War II, which divided Poland into German and Russian spheres of occupation. The Soviet zone covered much of the territory that Moscow had long considered its legitimate buffer zone. It also happened to include most of the old Jewish settlements in Poland. For Polish Jews, the pact was a lucky development. Though they were subjected to property confiscations, deportations, and other forms of Soviet political harassment, they were spared—for the time being—the fate of their friends and their relatives in the German zone.

The Germans occupied Jedwabne briefly in 1939, burning a synagogue in the process, but they withdrew three weeks later and yielded the town to "friendly" Soviet troops. The Polish population quickly organized an anti-Soviet resistance, which consisted of several partisan units operating from the neighboring marshlands. The Soviet security forces quickly crushed them. The traitor who led the Soviet enemy to his fellow fighters seems to have been a Pole, but the Poles nevertheless blamed the Jews. Arrests, executions, and deportations followed.

It is quite possible, though documents and testimonies are scarce, that in carrying out those repressions the Soviets used local collaborators—mostly communists or communist sympathizers—and that some of them were Jews. Although communists were a small minority among Polish Jewry, and traditional Jewish communities looked on the materialist and messianic heresy with abhorrence, Jews had a higher proportional representation in communist organizations, and in the leadership of those organizations, than their Polish neighbors. Before the war, the dominant political force among local Poles was the National Democratic Party, which openly called for the removal of Jews from Polish lands.

When, in 1941, Hitler attacked the Soviet Union and the Germans started pushing eastward, the unprepared Soviets quickly packed up and ran, probably taking with them most of the collaborators. Gross's story begins shortly after June 25, 1941, the day German units occupied Jedwabne. During this tense, chaotic time of transition, the first attacks on Jews took place. It did not take the Germans long to notice that, unlike in the Polish territories taken in 1939, Poles from the former Soviet zone greeted them without much hostility. Sometimes they were even welcomed as "liberators," releasing the Poles from the hands of the Soviet commissars. As indicated in several dispatches from the front, the Germans likewise observed that Poles seemed to share their enmity towards Jews, and quite easily absorbed Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda. The occupying forces grasped that anti-Semitism was useful for their purposes.

On July 10, 1941, the Germans called a meeting with the Jedwabne authorities. The Poles apparently agreed to help the Germans round up Jews, and to guard them in the town's marketplace. It seems that the locals who reported for the job did so willingly. There were also volunteers from neighboring villages, who came to town in their horse-drawn carts. Then things got out of hand. During the round-up Jews were beaten and humiliated, then savagely tortured, and finally killed with knives, stakes, iron pipes, and stones. (The Germans refused to supply the Poles with firearms.) Those who tried to escape were chased on horseback and dragged back. Some victims were mutilated and dismembered, or buried alive. There was at least one reported rape. A witness testified that a group of men played ball with the severed head of a girl. A rabbi was ordered to march around with a red flag. At some point during the pandemonium, a musical ensemble was rustled up to drown out the screams of the victims. Finally those who were still able to walk were marched through the town, packed into a barn, and burned alive.

WHO DID ALL this? The answer, writes Gross, is that "half of the population of a small East European town murdered the other half—some 1,600 men, women, and children." In various sources ninety-two participants were identified by name, and according to Gross's calculations, they constituted roughly 50 percent of the adult male Polish population of Jedwabne. Most of them must have been average citizens of this poor, deeply provincial part of Poland:

> In Jedwabne ordinary Poles slaughtered the Jews, very much as ordinary Germans from the *Ordnungspolizei* Battalion no. 101 did in Jozefów, as documented in Christopher Browning's *Ordinary Men*. They were men of all ages and of different professions; entire families on occasion, fathers and sons acting in concert; good citizens, one is tempted to say (if sarcasm were not out of place, given the hideousness of their deeds), who heeded the call of municipal authorities. And what the Jews saw, to their horror and, I dare say, incomprehension, were familiar faces. Not anonymous men in uniform, cogs in a war machine, agents carrying out orders, but their own neighbors, who chose to kill and were engaged in a bloody pogrom—willing executioners.

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Germans were present, too, but as amused witnesses, not as active participants. They mixed with the crowd, or stood on the sidelines taking photographs and shooting films. Nobody has discovered those obscene materials, but Gross believes that they may still exist, and so one day we may view the horror with our own eyes.

But there is no dearth of other documentation, and much of it must have been known of for years. The story of Jedwabne was told immediately after the war by Szmul Wasersztajn, one of several Jews saved by Antonina Wyrzykowska, a Polish woman who was one of the very few "righteous gentiles" from this area. Wasersztajn's testimony was deposited in the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, and it was later used in a criminal case brought against some of the perpetrators in 1949. Twenty-one people were tried, and nine were convicted and given sentences of anywhere from eight to fifteen years in prison. One person was sentenced to death, though in Gross's view his culpability was less than certain. Testimonies of the accused and of witnesses, which mostly corroborated Wasersztajn's version, were preserved in legal archives. In 1980, a Jedwabne memorial volume was published in Israel and the United States, and it is today available on the Internet.

OF COURSE, THE memory of the horrible incident persisted in Jedwabne—among eyewitnesses, and their children, and even their grandchildren. Several Polish historians who took part in the passionate and often vitriolic debate that surrounded the publication of Gross's book in Poland displayed a surprising familiarity with the details of the crime. And yet for all those years, not only under communism but also after its fall, an event of this magnitude was never considered worthy of scholarly inquiry. It remained buried deep within the "silent zone" of the Polish mind.

This may have been because the word "pogrom" is almost unutterable in Poland. Pogroms belong to the threatening, cruel domain of the East, to Russia and Ukraine and Belarus. Poland, in the mind of the Poles, is squarely rooted in the West; it is the bulwark of the West, the first and last line of defense of true civilization. Even the notion of anti-Semitism occupies a curious blind spot in the Poles' otherwise sharp historical vision. Poland had powerful political parties that openly preached the hatred of Jews; and the Catholic Church in Poland perpetuated anti-Jewish prejudices; and the anti-Jewish rants sometimes reached even the highest strata of Polish culture; and during the interwar period of independence

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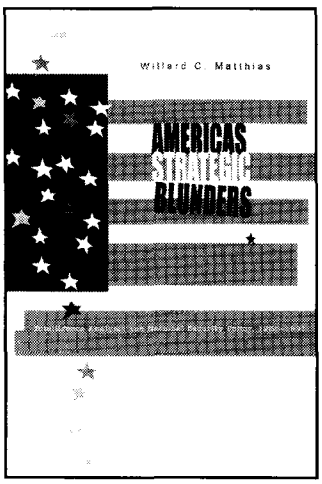

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there existed written and unwritten anti-Jewish laws; and violence against Jews was practiced brazenly and often with impunity: all this may be admissible. But there was no anti-Semitism! The very mention of the term still provokes indignant denials, and charges that one is trafficking in accusations of collective guilt.

Gross seems aware of how volatile and sensitive his compatriots' feelings on this subject can be. He stresses that probably none of what happened in Jedwabne would have taken place without the German presence in the town. Throughout the massacre, the Germans remained firmly in control. They likely set the events in motion, and they could have stopped them: "the tragedy of Jedwabne Jewry is but an episode in the murderous war that Hitler waged against all Jews." Elsewhere Gross writes of the moral chaos, the "institutionalization of resentment" into which both totalitarian systems plunged eastern Poland; and the ghosts of Hitler and Stalin do indeed hover over the Jedwabne massacre.

But Gross is right to note the presence also of Polish demons. Pogroms do not just happen. They are paroxysms of hate that has simmered for a long time, long enough to engulf considerable sections of a society; and they must be organized. "We must be clearheaded enough to remember," Gross observes, "that for each killing only a specific murderer or group of murderers is responsible. But we nevertheless might be compelled to investigate what makes a nation (as in 'the Germans') capable of carrying out such deeds." What would be worth investigating, for example, is the history of Polish nationalism and its gradual (and to Poles all but imperceptible) contamination with hatred. It would be useful to have a critical look at the weak points of the Polish concept of nationhood, which is understood as a community of language, culture, and faith. And a thing or two could be said about the spiritual model of Polish Catholicism, and about the chasm that was allowed to grow between Poles and Jews until it was possible for the former to understand the latter as being beyond the pale of human commonality.

III.

THAT MANY POLES are still steering clear of such reflections was made plain during the public debate that ensued upon the publication of Gross's book in Poland. Some people received it without objection. Some people, mostly on the extreme right, rejected it as yet another instance of Jews slandering Poles, or accused the author of having ulterior motives. ("It must have something to do with Jewish property claims," suggested one of the readers.) One of the most startling statements of this kind came from former Solidarity leader Lech Walesa. In a radio interview, Walesa called Gross a "mediocre writer," a "loser," and a "Jew who tries to make money" by sowing discord between Poles and Jews. The majority accepted the basic facts, but clearly hoped that under scrutiny the whole event would eventually prove to be less rooted in irrational anti-Jewish resentments than it seemed.

Some proposed, for example, that robbery was the real motive for the massacre, because "Jews controlled all stores and warehouses." Others suggested that the role of Germans must have been larger than Gross admits, or that a gang of bandits had terrorized the rest of the Poles. (Apparently a few Poles in Jedwabne pleaded for mercy for the Jews, but there are no indications of any attempts at forceful resistance.) Still others obsessively dwelled on minute details, as if expecting that some small discrepancy in the testimonies would magically undo Gross's whole case. Thus one polemicist, Slawomir Radon of the National Remembrance Institute, was perplexed that Gross did not account for the presence of the gasoline used to set the barn on fire. How was it obtained, when there were fuel shortages? Was it sold to the rioters, and if so, by whom? Other historians, such as Tomasz Szarota of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, questioned the reliability of eyewitnesses due to the "emotionally disturbing character of the related events," or hinted that the massacre was able to take place only because of the victims' passivity. (As proof of this alleged submissiveness, Szarota quotes the words of one Jedwabne Jew, whom the killers wanted to spare but who chose to remain in the barn, saying, "Wherever my rabbi goes, I shall go.")

Probably the most prominent of the Polish historians to take part in the debate, Tomasz Strembosz of Lublin's Catholic University, published an essay in *Rzeczpospolita*, one of Poland's largest daily newspapers, in which, while averring that nothing could justify the savagery of the crime, he insisted that the widespread collaboration of the Jews with the Soviets—that was the way he put it—was a necessary context in which to understand the events. Strembosz, an expert on the wartime history of eastern Poland, suggested that what happened in Jedwabne was not an eruption of anti-Jewish hatred, but an understandable, though unjustifiable, act of political retribution. It is worth remembering that a similar argument was often evoked to explain Polish hostility toward Jews after the war: Jews were supposed to enjoy a privileged relationship with the communist authorities. After all, communism itself was a "Jewish thing." Indeed, this was what the National Democrats preached before the war—that communism was nothing but a Jewish plot, a "Judeo-Commune," the greatest threat to Polish independence and Polish identity.

It is a fact that during the worst years of Stalinism in Poland the dreaded Ministry of Public Security was run by several Jews. One can speculate about the elaborate games that Stalin played in his Polish province. It is quite possible that he was planting those individuals in such prominent and universally hated positions so as to position them as future lightning rods that could be used, in case of emergency, to channel popular resentment into mere anti-Semitic outbursts, which would be less threatening to the communist structure of power. And there must also have been Jews among the Soviet collaborators in Jedwabne.

But if this was what incited Poles to slaughter the town's entire Jewish population, then the spark must have fallen on very combustible ground. It takes an anti-Semite to see a Jewish communist or a Jewish collaborator as acting on behalf of all Jews. Documents quoted by Strembosz clearly indicate that the Soviets recruited both Jewish and Polish sympathizers, who worked in concert implementing the new order, formed auxiliary police units and "proletarian guards," and occasionally meted out summary justice against the "enemies of the people"—and yet he speaks consistently about "Jewish collaboration." But when the Polish population starts looting property after the Soviet withdrawal, they are plundering "Soviet stores and depots," not Jewish stores and depots. Thus the bad things that Jews do, they do as Jews; but they suffer always as somebody else. If this kind of logic can surface in the writing of a prominent Polish scholar, what must the semi-literate nationalists from Jedwabne have thought?

GROSS ADVANCES AN interesting and plausible theory about Jewish collaboration with the Soviets and the Germans during the war, and later with the Stalinist regime. He proposes that "communities where Jews had been murdered by local inhabitants during the war were especially vulnerable to sovietization." For totalitarianism always needs a degree of social atomization, the breakdown of basic human bonds of solidarity and trust. Towns and villages where anti-Semitism was rampant, and where some people had blood on their hands, were already in a state of moral disintegration.

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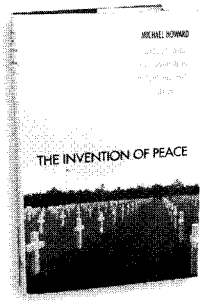

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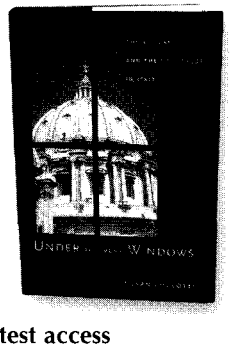

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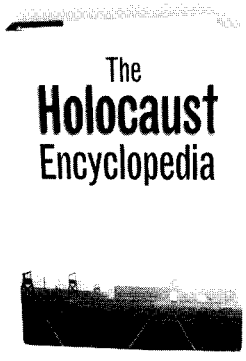

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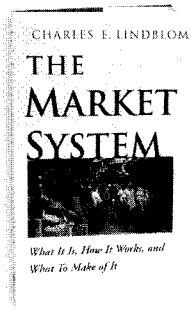

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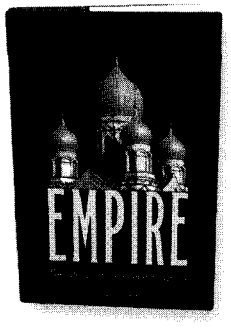

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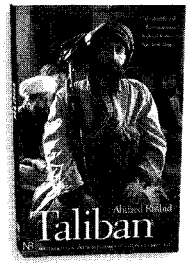

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Members of such communities were easily blackmailed, controlled, set against their kin. Should this hypothesis be correct, Gross says, one could posit that, contrary to Polish conventional wisdom, "anti-Semites rather than Jews were instrumental in establishing the Communist regime in Poland after the war."

Such truths are especially difficult to accept for a nation in transition such as Poland today, struggling to achieve the status of equal partner in the global community. Perhaps that is why so many people, even those who accepted not only Gross's historical account of events but also its moral meaning, expressed regret that *Neighbors* is being published in the West, where it could irreparably damage Poland's image. It could even provoke an anti-Polish campaign, they warned, or a new brand of historical revisionism, in which Poles would be presented together with Germans as jointly responsible for the Holocaust. This camp included Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, former director of the Polish service of Radio Free Europe and one of the most respected leaders of the Polish community in America. While stating that Poles should face the horror of Jedwabne squarely and should resist the temptation to look for moral loopholes, Nowak-Jeziorański warned nevertheless that there exist among Western Jews, especially American Jews, "extreme chauvinists and sworn enemies of Poland, who equal in their rancor Polish militant anti-Semites." Such Jews, Nowak-Jeziorański and many others argued, may use Gross's book as proof that Poles are even more anti-Semitic than Germans or Russians.

So even the apologies and the public gestures of contrition that surfaced in Polish society were mixed with old stereotypes of hate-filled Jews waiting for the opportunity to exonerate the Germans and to blame the Holocaust on the Poles. But this endless obsession about "image" disguises the true problem that Gross's book poses for Poles. What really matters is not how others view them, but how they must view themselves. Gross is right to suggest that the whole sphere of Polish-Jewish relations simply did not fit into the established Polish narrative of innocent, heroic suffering. "The memory, indeed the symbolism, of collective, national martyrology during the Second World War," he writes, "is paramount for the self-understanding of Polish society in the twentieth century." Poles want to regard their experience during the war as a direct continuation of a centuries-old pattern of noble resistance to foreign oppression—as the romantic epic of a noble nation struggling against barbarian hordes.

It is a rather simple narrative, with the roles of villains and heroes neatly defined and quickly recognizable. Conflicts are easily divided into "us" and "them," the forces of good and the forces of evil. And there are no third parties or other complicating factors: whatever is not "us" and not "them" is incidental, a footnote at best. But the narrative proved too simple to flourish unchallenged by reality. While reliving this mythic drama during World War II and the German occupation, the Poles encountered something both unexpected and deeply disorienting—something that certainly did not fit the pattern. Simultaneous with their own immense suffering, they beheld the annihilation of another people.

It is as if two wars were taking place in the same geographical area: a war against the Poles and a war against the Jews. They were separate wars, and yet they became entangled in an uncanny tapestry of human fates. And to complicate things even further, the "other" victims were a people about whom the Poles had always had ambiguous feelings. Indeed, they were a people whose disappearance—though certainly not in such a brutal and horrifying way—many Poles openly desired.

We do not know, of course, how this complication imprinted itself on the minds of average Poles. From what we do know, it is possible to conclude that between the heroism of some and the wickedness of others there stretched a vast sea of moral and emotional opacity, of dim and contradictory feelings, of callousness, contempt, compassion, denial, guilt; of actions and inactions whose motives were equally obscure and unnamable. Testimonies of Jewish survivors in Poland—and those who survived in Poland owed their survival to the assistance of Poles—often mention the hesitation with which they approached even those Poles whom they considered their friends before the war, and the strange misgivings that they felt about those who risked their lives for them. Poles sometimes call it a lack of gratitude, or "Jewish oversensitivity"; but in those days everything must have looked twisted, clouded, unintelligible. Perhaps even Poles saw themselves as strange, mysterious, unknowable—not at all like the bright and simple nation that they knew from their prayer books and their national legends.

The old narrative was broken; and this should have marked the end of innocence, and the beginning of maturity. But the romantic legend of Poland was revived after the war. After all, Poland was once again in bondage, and once again there was a demand for myths about a nation that, by the strength of its own purity, would triumph at last. We can never know this with any certainty, but it is at least possible that the zone of silence about Poles and Jews and all that had happened and was happening between them was conceived and constructed as a dam against the dimension of Polish experience that could undermine the cherished and protective myth.

But now the time of maturity has truly come. We are three generations away from the war, and the Polish nation really has survived. Political freedom begets the moral obligation of intellectual freedom. Today's Poles have no need to feel that they are guilty of the sins of their grandfathers. And collective apologies, which some have suggested, seem rather meaningless. We know that Polish history was not only about anti-Semitism, and that even the history of Polish-Jewish cohabitation in Poland cannot be reduced to a one-dimensional chronicle of unhappiness. But the obstacle has to be surmounted, somehow.

Gross's book has proved, among other things, that the existence of the silent zone is more troubling to Poles than to anyone

The Cruel Touch

From his fingertips, blue flame.
From his mouth, stinging wasps.
Inside the eyes barbed wire strung tight.
And how the carpenter's hammering next door
mimicked your heartbeat.

Decades later you're in that crouch, still.
Your eyelids tremble, you don't expect mercy.
To recall the cruel touch
is to bear it another time
and to bear the cruel touch
is to contort yourself around it
like tree roots forced aboveground
gnarled and devious.

The best feeling you've ever had,
never will you give it up.

Joyce Carol Oates

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else. It is a constant moral and social irritant, a cause of pointless recriminations and irrational fears. As Gross writes at the end of his book, the history of a nation is a biography in which everything connects with everything else:

> And if at some point in this collective biography a big lie is situated, then everything that comes afterward will be devoid of authenticity and laced with fear of discovery. And instead of living their own lives, members of such a community will be suspiciously glancing over their shoulders, trying to guess what others think about what they are doing. They will keep diverting attention from shameful episodes buried in the past and go on "defending Poland's good name," no matter what. They will take all setbacks and difficulties to be a consequence of deliberate enemy conspiracies. Poland is not an exception in this respect among European countries. And like several other nations, in order to reclaim its own past, Poland will have to tell its past to itself anew.

With the appearance of this extraordinary book, the telling has finally begun. ■

Invisible Man

By JAMES WOOD

Romancing: The Life and Work of Henry Green by Jeremy Treglown

(Random House, 331 pp., $26.95)

I.

ENGLISH MODERNISM, LIKE time or death, must be measured in units of exhaustion or negation. There is so little of it, and its life was so softly fleeting, that it is difficult to seize it, to pester it into palpability. And it is not only in size or historical passage that it seems evanescent; as art, it is itself frequently muted, pastoral, and elegiac. The absence of a true urban modernism is perhaps most striking. London makes appearances, of course, in English modernism, but there is no modernist Dickens—and no English Dos Passos, Céline, Joyce, Bely, or Döblin.

In music there was William Walton and Ralph Vaughan Williams, in art Stanley Spencer, and in literature Virginia Woolf and Henry Green. These artists took what they needed from the hard modernism of the Americans, the Irish, the Russians, and the Continental Europeans, and mixed it with the gentler seeds of native English life. Walton was influenced by Prokofiev, but he softened the Russian by passing his steely interruptions through the smooth wooden enclosure of that most English of instruments, the viola, in his Viola Concerto. And Henry Green made an English modernist fiction out of his hospitality to Chekhov, Proust, and Joyce.

Green is the least known of these figures, partly by his own design. He gladly disappeared into a public espionage of his own making. "Henry Green" was a nom de plume (he was born Henry Yorke). He resisted all forms of publicity and even biography, and he preferred to be photographed from behind, like a surrealist clerk, faceless in bondage. Though he was utterly unprecious about what he called "literature, that overblown trumpet"—he was a businessman for most of his life—he doubted that he could be popular, and for many years he chose not to be published in paperback. His novels, most of them given one-word gerund titles, appeared between 1926 and 1952, and then stopped, though Green was barely forty-seven: he began very early, publishing his first novel, *Blindness*, in 1926, when he was twenty-one, and his next novel, *Living*, in 1929. Ten years passed before the cluster of books that are his real achievement: *Party Going* (1939), *Pack My Bag* (1940), and above all *Loving* (1945).

Yet the deeper reasons for Green's relative obscurity have to do with the gentle comic reticence of his art. A girlfriend of his once remarked that he was hardly there, that he lived off the fat of others. As far as is possible in fiction, he tried to live off the fat of his characters. Though his prose is intensely distinctive, it strives to so mold itself around the characters of his novels that it might be the plausible emanation of those characters themselves. His later books are written almost entirely in dialogue, and all the speech in all his novels proceeds, like Green's prose, through indirection and obliquity.

Like Woolf, he was influenced by the new translations of Chekhov by Constance Garnett that were appearing in the teens of the last century. He saw that Chekhov had discovered that people express themselves most tellingly in their irrelevances; that people seem real to us when they seem real to themselves, and that they often seem real to themselves when they are being most private, strange, and fantastic. He saw that people in life often refuse to present themselves, and swerve away from purpose. But fiction, alas, and drama too, often bully characters into formal self-presentation, in a way that has more to do with the conventions of art than the anarchy of existence. This was what Chekhov surely meant when he complained that Ibsen was "no playwright. In life, it simply isn't like that at all."

JUST AS ART often forces characters into unnatural presentation, so it forces itself into shapely presentations of one kind or another—and these artificialities, too, Green sought to annul, by creating an art of disheveled purpose. His books truly seem to drift, and at times he takes the reader to the limit of patience as his scenes wind and tremble through half-thought and secret surmise. He is best known for the extraordinary delicacy with which he listened to speech, especially to English dialect. He began his second novel, *Living*, just after leaving Oxford, while he was working on the factory floor of his father's engineering firm. Here, one of the workers describes a fellow patient in the hospital:

> There was a feller opposite my bed that had lengths cut out of his belly and when they brought 'im in again, an' he come to after the operation, they told him 'e could eat anything that took 'is fancy. So he said a poached egg on toast would suit 'im for a start but when they took it to 'im he brought it up. Black it was. And everything they took him after he brought it up just the same till they were givin' 'im port, brandy and champagne at the end.

This is remarkably good for any twenty-three-year-old writer, but Green would become still more expert at letting his characters reveal themselves in scrambled increments.

Though he was fascinated by the way Chekhov used irrelevance, the major pre-

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cursor was almost certainly Shakespeare (and Dickens after him). In *Henry IV, Part 2*, Mistress Quickly tries to convince Falstaff that he was present in her tavern at a crucial moment:

> Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, upon Wednesday in Wheeson week, when the Prince broke thy head for liking his father to a singing-man of Windsor, thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me and make me my lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not goodwife Keech, the butcher's wife, come in then and call me gossip Quickly?

Mistress Quickly's speech enlarges and contracts like a fan, moving between apparently relevant detail ("upon Wednesday") and irrelevant detail ("by a sea-coal fire"), and thus between different temporalities, the private and the universal. Of course, what seems irrelevant to us is terribly relevant to Mistress Quickly, for she is engaged upon a project of massive definition: she is reminding Falstaff that he loves her, and thus, in a way, that she exists.

Everything is at stake in this rush of detail. If, as Augustine and Freud thought, there is no such thing as forgetting, then there is not really such a thing as remembering, and the border between what is relevant and what is irrelevant disappears. To whom are we absent when we are absent-minded? Perhaps relevance is just a kind of enlargement, a swelling, a displacement of irrelevance.

In *Loving*, characters are continually expressing the most important things about themselves in speeches of apparent indirection and irrelevance. As in Mistress Quickly's speech, the subject is often love. And in all of Green, there is a distinctive spatial movement between the local and the general, and the prosaic and the lyrical. In *Loving*, Mrs. Welch, an embittered and sometimes drunken housekeeper, denounces the butler, Raunce, and the maid with whom he is in love, Edith, to the lady of the house (whom she calls "mum," for "ma'am"):

> That's just it mum. For this is what those two are, that Raunce and his Edith. I don't say nothin' about their being lain all day in each other's arms, and the best part of the night too very likely though I can't speak to the night time, I must take my rest on guard and watch as I am while it's light outside, lain right in each other's arms . . . the almighty lovers they make out they are but no more than fornicators when all's said and done if you'll excuse the expression, where was I?

The moment of spatial shift in this passage occurs when Mrs. Welch, with wonderful absurdity, tells her mistress that she cannot watch Raunce and Edith at night—"I can't speak to the night time, I must take my rest on guard and watch as I am while it's light outside." Suddenly, we gain access to the daily habits of Mrs. Welch, and by means of her ridiculous pomposity she enlarges before us, so that she almost becomes the light itself ("as I am while it's light outside"). In this moment, the speech deepens, from merely a comic denunciation of envied and imagined erotic bliss into an appalling, unwitting confession, in which Mrs. Welch almost seems to be implying that she will keep watching Raunce and Edith as long as there is light to watch them by.

COURTESY RANDOM HOUSE

Henry Green, by Cecil Beaton

This sudden shift or leap is one of the finest things in Green's prose. In *Living*, he writes of a woman who is falling for a fellow worker, "From joking with him and from the long day talking with him her laughing went out all at once into confidences." It is very hard to say why that phrase "went out all at once" is so right, and—despite its careful vagueness—so precise. But we know the ways in which, suddenly, our intimacy with someone else goes out all at once into confidences, and deepens.

Green's prose "goes out all at once" in the same way; and suddenly goes in, too. In *Pack My Bag*, a memoir written in 1939, just before the outbreak of World War II, Green described the large house and grounds in which he was born, and mentioned a gardener who had worked at the house for forty years. The gardener was called Poole: "The house washed over in pink, was built raised up above these lawns on a low embankment, and it troubled Poole to mow the sides, he had a bad leg." In this characteristic run-on sentence, that little tail—"he had a bad leg"—suddenly takes the reader from contemplation of the house to Poole, and then to Poole's leg, and it does so in the swift, homely way that Poole might have put it.

Green describes the house, Forthampton, in Gloucestershire, near the Severn River: "We lived here in the early years, in soft lands and climate influenced by the Severn, until my grandfather died and we moved to the big house a mile nearer the river where it went along below the garden." Again, description suddenly swells, goes out from the local and enlarges itself—"in soft lands and climate influenced by the Severn"—before contracting again into the domestic ("until my grandfather died"). But *Pack My Bag* is full of such exquisite prose:

> Again, each Sunday afternoon we had a walk still dressed in our best and we could draw in the sweet country air, this island's attar of roses, coming from the sea overland to where we meandered, the woods all about us, rooks up in the sky, the cattle in the fields . . . we had that view over all the county where it lay beneath in light haze like a king's pleasure preserved for idle hours.

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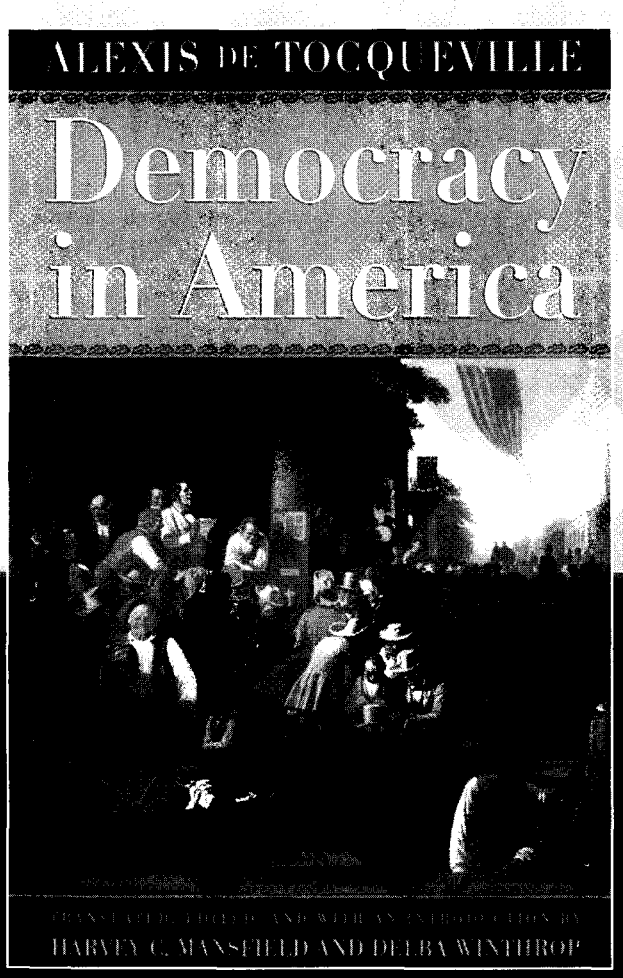

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In the same book, Green writes that prose is not to be read aloud "but to oneself alone at night, and it is not quick as poetry but rather a gathering web of insinuations.... Prose should be a long intimacy between strangers with no direct appeal to what both may have known."

In the passage above, when Green moves between a Sunday walk and "this island's attar of roses" (encompassing the whole country in that phrase, as well as lodging his language within the English poetic tradition), and likens the rural view to "a king's pleasure," we see enacted what he means by a gathering web of insinuations and a long intimacy. As *Pack My Bag* is a kind of self-elegy, written in the prospect of certain war and possible death, so it is also an elegy for England in its long last summer of peace.

II.

HENRY YORKE WAS born in 1905, into one of the most prominent aristocratic families in England. His mother, Maud Wyndham, was the daughter of the second Baron Leconfield, who lived in Petworth, one of the country's finest houses, in Sussex. In his distinguished biography, Jeremy Treglown paints a vivid and scrupulous picture of the Yorkes, who, unlike many of their English coevals, were neither philistine nor unintelligent. Henry's father, Vincent, had taken a double First in classics at Cambridge, and had been a fellow at King's. As a young man, he had been an adventuring archaeologist, and had identified a Kurdish village as the birthplace of the Greek satirist Lucian. By the time Henry was born, he was living two lives, one as the managing director of Pontifex, the family firm that made brewing equipment and plumbing for bathrooms and lavatories, and another as a traditional English squire, running his estate, riding to hounds, and dominating his three very intelligent sons, of whom Henry was the youngest.

Treglown's biography was briefly authorized by the Yorke family, and then unauthorized, and he has had to live on a certain amount of rationing. As far as the reader is concerned, this only strengthens his book, toughening his selections of detail, and persuading the book somewhat out of traditional biography and into portraiture. He writes, in his preface, that he wants to make a wide case for Green's writing, and his book succeeds splendidly. It is a pleasure, after recent logorrheic bloaters, to encounter Treglown's more starved example of the genre, and to find sentences at once crisp and witty. Describing Green's time at Eton, Treglown writes: "Success at Eton often appeared to be the most perfect kind of success there could be. Failure, on the other hand, could prompt a correspondingly vivid sympathy with the human lots of which most Etonians had little direct experience."

Treglown writes very well about Green's early years. He was precocious: at Eton he wrote several stories for the school magazine, which were published a few years ago in a posthumous collection of miscellaneous writings called *Surviving*. As schoolboy fingerings they are astoundingly assured, and already portend the kind of writer that Green would become. One of them, "Emma Ainsley," begins with a conversation between two women, overheard on a train: "What a lot Nuneaton [an English town] meant to Emma!" says the first. The other replies: "Mary, she deserved it." As an adult, Green would listen very hard to conversations on buses and in pubs, though he never regarded writing dialogue as simply a reportorial or fiduciary matter. Dialogue, in Green, is not about the writer "getting it right," as creative writing workshops insist. It is both a fidelity to the actual and an unreal infidelity, as in Shakespeare and Dickens, both a report and a dance.

Green left Oxford before taking his degree, and embarked on a radical act: he went to work on the factory floor of Pontifex (which his friends called Pontifex Maximus) in Birmingham. In *Pack My Bag*, he writes that most of the workers assumed that he had been sent there by

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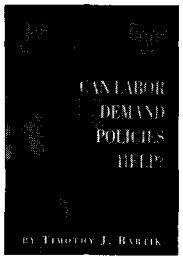

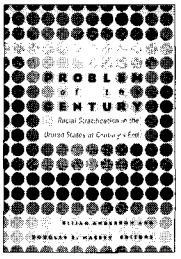

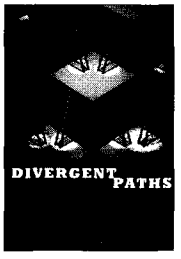

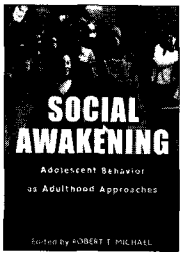

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his father as a punishment. In the factory, he listened with love to the dialect-pitted speech of his fellow workers. His father had been interested in the way that the servants and staff at Forthampton spoke, and often consulted his dialect dictionary. Green had an interest in, and a sympathy for, the English working classes, and in particular for servants, which was certainly political, and it produces an interesting politics in the novels. But it is stranger than politics. Green was a curious mixture of the conventional and the radical. He was snobbish, shy, patrician; and yet he tended to see English society from the bottom up, as if lying on the ground. It was this that his friend and rival Evelyn Waugh disliked in his work, sensing class guilt.

But Green did not have the politics, nor the class guilt, of his fellow Etonian George Orwell. In *Pack My Bag*, he argues simply that working-class speech is more poetic than conventional middle-class or upper-class speech, and he gives examples of language overheard in the factory: "His eyes started out of his head like little dog's testicles." Or this, a laborer talking about his brown dog: "What he likes is I take him out into the fields week-ends and he rolls 'im white in the grass." When workers describe, Green writes, "they are literally unsurpassed in the spoken word." This unsurpassed spoken poetry is the fabric of Green's second novel, *Living*, which is set in a Birmingham factory, and takes place largely among the factory's employees.

BUT *LOVING*, PUBLISHED in 1945, is a much more considered achievement, and it is rightly thought to be Green's best novel. It is set in a country house in Ireland during World War II, and depicts a kind of Shakespearean saturnalia, not unlike the world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which the servants effectively take over the house when the mistress, Mrs. Tennant, leaves to go to England for a few days. There is little in the way of dynamic plot, and yet the book's bashful, shaded drift brings to our sympathy several souls. There is Charley Raunce, who has recently become the head butler, and Edith, the housemaid with whom he is in love and whom he intends to marry. There is Edith's friend Kate, also a maid, who loves the Irish stable hand. (The domestic staff, as well as the Tennant family, are English.) There is Mrs. Tennant and her daughter-in-law Mrs. Jack, whose husband is away on military duty. Mrs. Jack is having an affair with a neighbor, Captain Davenport.

The speech in this book is a constant joy, and a poetry so entwined with Green's lyricism that the dancer and the dance really cannot be separated. What delights is not only the dialect's archaicisms—"Oh there's no need for you to fash yourself Mr. Raunce," "Mortal damp these passages are" (Green might well have gotten this use of "mortal" from Joyce's "The Dead"), "for land's sake," "because I know how it is at their age always worriting"—but also the Shakespearean way in which words are created to mime the effect of dialect. Talking about Mrs. Jack's children, Edith says, "Well I've got to take those little draggers out this afternoon." In a marvelous scene, Edith comes into Mrs. Jack's bedroom and finds her in bed with Captain Davenport. Mrs. Jack sits up in shock, realizes she is naked and is revealing her breasts, and retreats beneath the sheets. Edith also is shocked, but later, with the other staff, she comically takes pride in her witnessing: "'Well then isn't this a knock out?' she asked. 'An' it happened to me,' she added. 'After all these years.'" Later still, she remembers Mrs. Jack, and the way "she sat up in bed with her fronts bobblin'... like a pair of geese."

It is easy to forget that, despite Shakespeare's great example, the English novel, a bourgeois form, tended not to bother itself with women like Edith and men like Raunce. George Eliot apologizes to her readers for having to dwell briefly on rural

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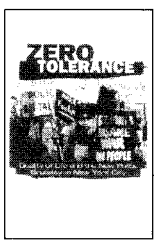

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bumpkins, and Forster, in *The Longest Journey*, writes that Mr. Ansell, a draper, should be classed with the phenomena that are not really there. Hardy and Lawrence (in some of the early stories) were the great pioneers of the art that Green brought to such perfection. In the fictional worlds of Chekhov and Giovanni Verga (whom Lawrence translated in the late 1920s), we see a narrative style in which the author's commentary and the characters' thoughts are so at one that the similes and metaphors provided by the writer might easily have been invented by the characters. Thus Chekhov describes, in a peasant village, the music of "an expensive-sounding accordion," and both Chekhov and Verga, interestingly, describe a man's handwriting as looking like a mess of fishhooks. In such cases, the writers have disappeared into their characters' imaginations.

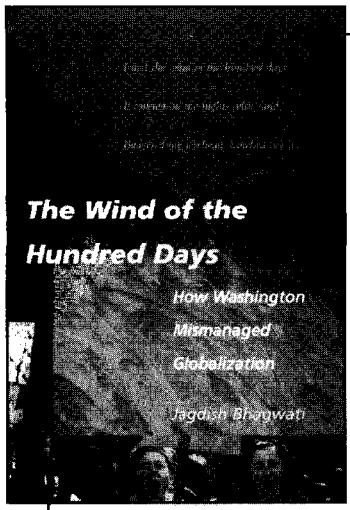
Green was obsessed with this kind of disappearance, and extended—perhaps further than any writer ever has—this principle of invisibility. In *Living*, he removed many of the definite articles, running words together so that even passages of description or authorial commentary read like speech or stream-of-consciousness. In *Loving*, he removes the "-ly" of the descriptive adverb after speech, in an attempt to mimic the dialect of his characters. Thus: "'Come on,' she said, brisk," instead of "briskly," since Edith would probably contract the word. And so we have "Raunce eyed her very sharp," "Kate finished dogged," and so on, throughout the book.

The smallest passage shifts its registers like a canal moving through locks as Green inhabits his characters, then briefly comes out, then re-enters them. Take the scene when Edith has come upon Mrs. Jack and the captain in bed:

> A movement over in the bed attracted her attention. She turned slow. She saw a quick stir beside the curls under which Mrs. Jack's head lay asleep, she caught sight of someone else's hair as well, and it was retreating beneath silk sheets. A man. Her heart hammered fit to burst her veins. She gave a little gasp.
>
> Then the dark head was altogether gone. But there were two humps of body, turf over graves under those pink bedclothes. And it was at this moment Mrs. Jack jumped as if she had been pinched. Not properly awake she sat straight up. She was nude. Then no doubt remembering she said very quick, 'Oh Edith it's you it's quite all right I'll ring.' On which she must have recognized that she was naked. With a sort of cry and crossing her lovely arms over that great brilliant upper part of her on which, wayward, were two dark upraised dry wounds shaking on her, she also slid entirely underneath.

It is a superbly vital and flowing piece of prose. We travel from Edith's perception, expressed in a language that she might use ("Her heart hammered fit to burst her veins") to a metaphor that lies somewhere between the literary and the vernacular, somewhere between Green himself and Edith—the sheets over the humps of body likened to "turf over graves"—to a register frankly literary and lyrical, in which Green, always beautifully attentive to female forms, notes Mrs. Jack's "lovely arms" and her "wayward" breasts, like "two dark upraised dry wounds shaking on her"—the same breasts which, forty pages later, Edith will convert into *her* speech, and call "her fronts bobblin'... like a pair of geese."

Green differs from Chekhov and Verga in the intensity of his lyricism: only he would dare to call Mrs. Jack's arms "lovely." He is, in this sense, a modernist stylist. But the peculiar effect of this rapid interchange between speaking through his characters and speaking as himself is that his lyricism undeniably issues from the author but appears so briefly that it seems to be denied its moment of issue.



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Thus Green's lyricism, while always and only his, seems not quite to come from its maker, who slips away while his different styles mingle.

His prose, constructed with utmost care, has an air of carelessness. In this Green resembles Lawrence, both of them attempting to dive through prose to a submarine vitality. Lawrence uses repetition to startle words out of their accretions, and to show that language moves in cars of one, for all that those cars are joined. Green is unafraid of repetition, but his stylistic principle is a Joycean run-on, without commas: "coming over the hill to the first sight of where one is to fish, where under the withies nodding low into moving water chubb lie in wait to pick up what falls to them from those sharp pointed leaves." This fast unpunctuated welter intensifies each word even as it seems to throw out the words as they are speedily consumed. In its air of careless largesse, Green's writing retains a certain aristocratic elegance.

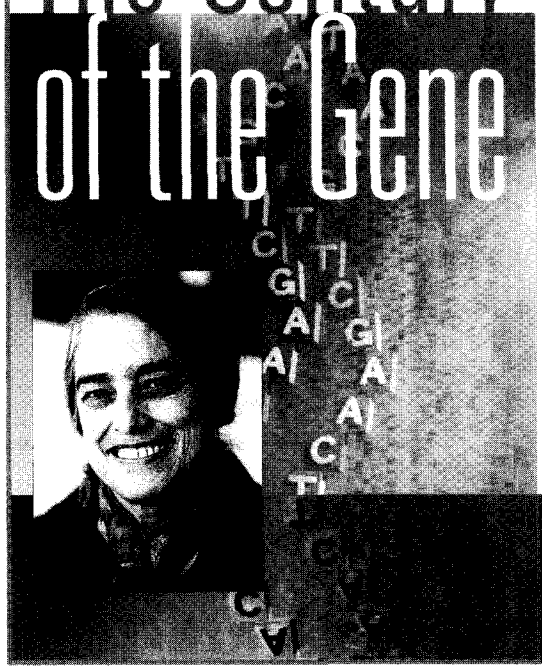
III.

In Treglown's very subtle account, Green appears evasive, passionate, and sad. He was tall, handsome, an extremely hospitable listener—that writer's ear, his greedy gatherer—with a quick and loud laugh. Though he could be a very funny anecdotalist, he was happiest, like Chekhov, when he found himself a little to one side of a social event. He was extremely attractive to women (again like Chekhov) and had numerous affairs, each prefaced with the commandment that they should be limited, since he adored his wife and would never leave her. (He did so only by dying before her, in 1973.)

One of the many stories Treglown tells, and tells well, concerns a meeting that Green and Eudora Welty had in London in 1950. It gives us something of Green's captivating flavor. Welty had been snobbishly received by most of the London literary crowd, and was introduced to Green at a party. She was thrilled, having read *Loving* on the boat from America. The two spoke animatedly, and Green invited Welty to his house. He was not physically attracted to the American writer (at this stage in his life he was drawn to debutantes and socialites in their early twenties), but the two had a passionate encounter of a kind, talking for hours in Green's study and, years later, exchanging letters that, Treglown says, on Green's side read almost like love letters. "He was a terribly attractive man, of course," Welty said, and he had a mixture of spontaneity, mischief, and humor, "a hilarious streak that goes all through his work.

EVELYN FOX KELLER

The Century of the Gene



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And he had that wonderful sudden laugh, just explosive."

If Welty did not see a sadness in Green, it was because she did not become his lover. Other women apprehended a painful vulnerability. By the late 1940s, Green was drinking very heavily, and was becoming convinced that he could not write. His last novel, *Doting*, appeared in 1952. For most of his adult life, he had gone to work in the Pontifex office in London, where he was the managing director, and had come home to write in the evenings. But the writing would not come, and the daily trek to the office had become calcified habit. He acted like a man much older than he was, and indeed he was going prematurely deaf. In an interview, he spoke, alongside his love of jazz, of "the aching shallows" of middle age.

TREGLOWN'S CLOSING PAGES are unbearably sad, though tactfully written. Green developed a kind of agoraphobia, and stopped going out. "The whole thing is really not to go out," he said, "if one can afford it, the best thing is to stay in one place, which might be bed." He was eased out of the family firm in 1959, when the directors, at a board meeting, noticed that the glass of clear liquid that Green had at the table was not water but gin. Treglown writes that by the mid-1960s, "his main interest was to watch sports on television."

If a "hilarious streak goes all through" Green's work, as Welty rightly says, then a melancholy one goes through it, too. One of the beautiful effects of Green's unstopping and tissueless sentences, winding on without delay of punctuation, is not only the intensification of language that they bring, but also the intensification of sentiment, by making it seem careless, or even social. Waugh, like Green, gets much of his comic effect by speeding up his prose to the pace of speech, and clippingly excluding available sentiment; but in Green, who has a deeper lyrical impulse, the evasion of sentiment only excites, by its lack, the desire for sentiment.

In *Pack My Bag*, Green recalls that when he was at prep school, during World War II, it was a rule that when a boy's mother came to take her son out for tea, the boy had to bring along a friend.

> This rule was unbreakable and it so happened that when a friend's father lost his life and his mother came down to read out his last letters home I went out with them and after tea we sat in that park I have described and they both cried over his letters as we sat with our backs against a tree. You would have thought this rule could be relaxed at such a time but there was no question of it. We always had boiled eggs when out for tea.

Again, the sudden contraction of the sentence, from grief against a tree to habitual boiled eggs. But more than that, the casual speed of the sentence—moving at the brisk, clipped pace of upper-class English speech—evacuates sentiment from its society, has no room for sentiment, which is then achingly provided by the reader. The same kind of principle is at work in *Loving*, whereby the servants effectively push World War II out of their world, only ever referring to Hitler as "he": "But perhaps he will keep to London with his bombing."

In this latter case, the principle of exclusion seems joyful rather than clipped; and yet both passages express a reticent stoicism, which Green indeed found characteristic of both upper-class and working-class English manners. In his work, both types of the English tend to speak past each other or around each other in crescents of evasion, rather than at each other. *Loving* might as well be called *Living*, since we love, Green tells us, in the same way that we live, by refusing to surrender our singleness and privacy.

If Green remains, in the end, a very fine minor novelist, it is perhaps because he is too generous toward drift and half-thought. The fine determination not to prosecute a purpose—he is the opposite of the didactic Lawrence in this regard—creates an exquisitely unpressing art, unlike any other. But it leaves us with characters who have motives only in relation to one another, and never burn singly, under the flare of an idea, an ideology, a demonic want. Chekhov has his intellectuals, however thwarted and foolish they are. Green has only his unfurious English, softly passionate and melodic. But oh how he served them! ■

The Figure in the Carpetbagger

By MICHAEL GRUNWALD

Hillary's Turn: Inside Her Improbable, Victorious Senate Campaign by Michael Tomasky

(The Free Press, 309 pp., $25)

I.

MY FAVORITE WEIRD and appalling moment of Hillary Rodham Clinton's weird and appalling Senate campaign came during a panel discussion of Jewish issues at an Upper East Side synagogue. I will always remember it as the day she accidentally came clean about her political motives.

First, some context. Mrs. Clinton had a Jewish problem. Before she started running for Senate in New York—where twelve percent of the electorate is Jewish—she had been an early and enthusiastic supporter of a Palestinian state. Then, on a spectacularly clumsy and ill-advised visit to Ramallah shortly after entering the race, she had greeted an anti-Semitic diatribe by Suha Arafat with a big kiss. Then a new book had accused her of calling one of her husband's Arkansas cronies a "fucking Jew bastard" in 1974. By October, her opponent Rick Lazio was trashing her relentlessly as soft on Israel, which is a nasty charge here in West West Jerusalem. So Mrs. Clinton was fighting back with Likud-style "Israel First" rhetoric, blaming Suha's husband for every shred of Middle East violence, distancing herself from her own husband's we're-all-in-this-together, give-peace-another-chance diplomacy. At the synagogue that day, she even conceded that she had been mistaken to visit Ramallah in the first place. But the real peek behind the curtain came later in the forum, when she was asked why she had said that she would not meet with bad-for-the-Jews Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, even though good-for-the-Jews Joe Lieberman had said that he would agree to such a meeting. "Well, I would not because I

MICHAEL GRUNWALD is a national reporter for *The Washington Post*.

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don't find it would be very useful to me," she explained.

There was nervous laughter, then an awkward pause. One of her aides used to joke in private that no one had ever lost a New York election by pandering too much to Jews, but now Mrs. Clinton was saying practically the same thing in public: I wouldn't do that because it would be lousy New York politics. And she did not seem to grasp why anyone would find that funny. "I've learned from being in the White House and the administration that there are things one does when the whole nation is your responsibility that you do when you feel it would be useful," she continued. "But if that would not be useful for me now, I would not undertake that." If that would not be useful for me now, I would not undertake that: a perfect slogan for Hillary 2000. A perfect slogan, perhaps, for the Clinton family approach to politics. A perfect slogan, you could argue, for the contemporary political campaign. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

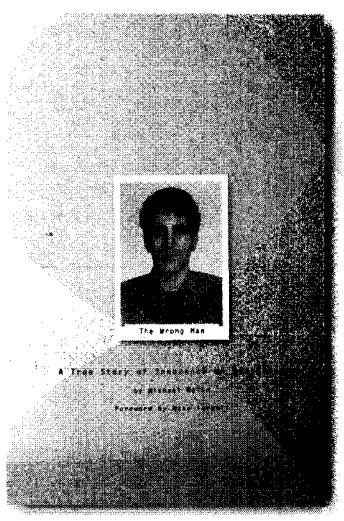
I COVERED THE first week of Mrs. Clinton's campaign in July 1999, back when almost everyone who wasn't giving the Clintons coffee tables and flatware thought that the enterprise was weird and at least semi-appalling. The reasons were obvious. The candidate was born and raised in Illinois, educated in Massachusetts and Connecticut, and spent her adult years in Arkansas and Washington. She had never lived or worked or showed any particular interest in New York. She had never run for mayor or dogcatcher or any other public office. Her husband, who happened to be the leader of the free world, had appointed her to revise the nation's health care system, but she had royally and obnoxiously botched the job, demonstrating an utter lack of political skill. She was America's most polarizing woman, perceived by millions as the powerful shrew responsible for vanishing billing records, travel-office firings, cattle-futures windfalls, the "vast right-wing conspiracy" business, and the unforgettable canard about Tammy Wynette. She was, in fact, under investigation by an independent counsel. And then, after her no-good husband got incompetently jiggy with one of his office interns and paralyzed the country for two years, she had actually stood by her man.

But by the time I came back to New York to cover the last six weeks of the race in the fall of 2000, her campaign—or at least the general perception of her campaign—had undergone an amazing transformation. Mrs. Clinton was still running as an unapologetic carpetbagger, and she was still married to the seducer-in-chief, but hardly anyone thought the unprecedented situation was all that weird anymore. And aside from the hard-core Clinton-haters—the lunatics who stalked her on the road with "Who's Your Husband Raping Now?" signs and accused her on the Internet of Vince Foster's murder—hardly anyone still thought her campaign was particularly appalling.

She had bored New York into submission, droning on endlessly about focus-grouped Democratic issues throughout a heavily Democratic state, steadfastly refusing to answer questions about her marriage or her record or her health care fiasco. She had patiently slogged through all sixty-two New York counties, including twenty-six visits to the Buffalo area, twenty-three visits to Albany, sixteen visits to Rochester, and fifteen visits to Syracuse, eventually persuading voters of her seriousness through the mere fact of her presence. She had succeeded in making the unfathomable seem routine.

Michael Tomasky covered all sixteen months of the campaign for *New York* magazine, and he has chronicled Mrs. Clinton's efficient transformation in a well-written, accurately reported, and quickly assembled book that unfortunately misses the point of the whole bizarre experience. Tomasky has provided an excellent primer on New York politics: the historical context, the cartoonish characters, the media landscape. He certainly deserves credit for systematically shredding the *New York Post*'s execrable

WHY IS JOE SPAZIANO STILL IN JAIL?



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Dick Morris, who has yet to retract his vengeful pronouncements that Bill would fire Ken Starr, that Hillary would never run, that Hillary had no chance, that Hillary would take the money to run in Illinois, that the Clintons leaked the story about Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's mistress, and so on.

Tomasky also tells a great story about his one-on-one interview with the first lady, in which she discussed walking the Olduvai Gorge and singing the *Flintstones* theme song at her father's deathbed, and showed other flashes of humanity. I have some reservations about his portrayal of Hillary Clinton as a nineteenth-century-style women's reformer—morally idealistic, politically pragmatic, sexually repressed—but it is a useful corrective to the misleading images of her as a 1960s-style bra-burning radical. And it is hard to disagree with Tomasky's conclusion about her campaign: "It was infuriating. It took a lot of gall. And in the end, it was kind of brilliant."

This is true: in the end, it did work. She won in a landslide. She overcame the jokes and the hatred and the doubts about her motives. She dominated the Democratic cities and did better than anyone expected in the Republican boonies. She even pulled off a miraculous ninety-nine percent sweep of that suburban Hasidic community in Rockland County! Who can argue with success?

Well, I can. For the fact that Hillary Clinton persuaded voters to ignore the weird and appalling nature of her campaign does not make it any less weird or appalling. And this is the basic problem with Tomasky's book: it is far more interested in her "kind of brilliant" strategy than in her "infuriating" substance. I do not mean to suggest that Tomasky is a credulous sycophant. He dutifully recounts her "amateur-night" stumbles, her "preternatural" caution, her "exasperating" evasions, her "phony" efforts to humanize herself. He recalls that "when she at last appeared on two morning shows in the campaign's final week, she didn't even pretend to answer the questions put to her." He recounts how "she stuck passively to a script of banal clichés that could have been assembled by chimpanzees." He acknowledges that while she claimed she was running for Senate because she thought she could have the most impact on important issues there, "she never explained this in a way that sounded as if she actually meant it."

But none of this baldly deceptive and intentionally vacuous behavior seems to bother Tomasky very much. All these trimmings are peripheral issues in his account. The real story is that she won. He believes that those of us who obsessed about the disingenuousness and too-strange-to-be-true-ness of an impeached president's wronged wife moving out of the White House and into an unfamiliar state to try to join the institution that acquitted her husband were missing the point: "She won, and she won precisely because she ignored all the craziness."

So Tomasky mostly ignores the craziness, too. (Except for Giuliani's amazing meltdown, which was too public for anyone to ignore.) He focuses instead on how an inexperienced candidate neutralized doubts about her candidacy and lulled the media to sleep and won fifty-five percent of the vote. It didn't satisfy anybody's craving for suspense, but here's how she did it: by talking and talking and talking about The Issues. In fact, the book's central drama—and one of its only revelations—is a long-running behind-the-scenes battle over that three-yards-and-a-cloud-of-dust strategy.

Some Clinton advisers thought that she should open up, that she should directly and even humorously confront the negative perceptions about her carpetbagger candidacy. Others thought that she should remain robotically on message, that she should keep ignoring all non-softball questions and talk exclusively about The Issues. She ultimately decided to keep talking in those chimpanzee-assembled clichés about The Issues, which turned out well for her, but did not make for very riveting drama.

And this, it just so happens, was the point, the unstated mission of the Hillary 2000 campaign. It was designed to be dull. It was supposed to shift attention from an unexpected and even fascinating candidate—and from her flimsy record, her political tin ear, and her transparent motives for running for Senate in the nation's second-most-Democratic state—to the poll-tested pablum that she was repeating over and over again on the trail. It was a hoax, an intellectually and emotionally dishonest scheme to get a job without a résumé. But fifty-five percent of New York's voters went along with it, and so did Tomasky.

Hillary Rodham Clinton by Victor Juhasz for The New Republic

II.

HILLARY CLINTON began her campaign with three rhetorical questions: "Why the Senate? Why New York? Why me?" It was July 7, 1999, and she was launching a statewide "listening tour," a four-month effort to "meet with New Yorkers from all walks of life" and to "learn about the issues that matter to them most." And where better to start listening than the upstate farm of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the venerable pol whom she hoped to succeed, whom she oddly described that day as "probably the wisest New Yorker we can know of at this time"? (Yes, this was the same Daniel Patrick Moynihan who had called her health care plan "a fantasy," and had been the first Democratic senator to call for an independent counsel over Whitewater.) The senator spoke first to the international army of reporters assembled on his

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property, and almost forgot to endorse the first lady. Then she posed her three questions, and—in a rare moment of responsiveness—tried to answer them as well: New Yorkers, she said, care deeply about issues such as education, health care, and jobs, and she had been a "tireless advocate" on those issues for her entire adult life.

But wait a minute. How did she know what issues New Yorkers cared about deeply? Wasn't that supposed to be the purpose of the listening tour on which she was about to embark? Or was the listening tour just a humble-pie sham? Tomasky doesn't call it that. But he does report that Hillary's advisers had two goals for the tour, and that neither had anything to do with learning about the issues: "First, to show voters that she wasn't the scheming harridan of their imaginations; second, to bore the press into submission." Tomasky even explains how the "listening sessions" were prearranged to prevent hostile or unexpected questions, and how she simply ignored questions that she feared might make news or create an uncomfortable situation. "In Jamestown, at a furniture factory, a woman said with some scorn in her voice that her husband had lost his job because of NAFTA. Hillary thanked her for her comment and looked immediately away to the next questioner."

Tomasky's implicit question is: So what? The ruse worked. The tour made her look earnest. "She looked people in the eye, and she nodded as they talked, with a nod that was grandiose, like a stage actor's; whether she was taking people seriously or not, the nod sure made it look as if she was." Of course, we all knew that she wasn't taking people seriously at all. She was using them as human props to make herself look curious and empathetic, and to glaze over the prying eyes of the press. But in Tomasky's book—and in most political journalism these days—intellectual honesty is much less important a subject than strategic effectiveness.

Thus it did not matter to the press during the presidential campaign that George W. Bush promised to reserve $1 trillion of Social Security money for individual retirement accounts while continuing to promise that $1 trillion to retiring seniors; what mattered was whether the flimflam helped him in the polls. It is interesting to note, moreover, that only major substantive lies are immune to journalistic scrutiny. Al Gore's stretchers about *Love Story* and Love Canal were seen as very serious gaffes. So while it may be true that many modern campaigns are just as substantively dishonest—which is to say, just as tyrannized by marketing professionals—as Hillary 2000, that may be a logical response to the strategy-first attitudes of modern political journalism.

HILLARY'S ENTIRE LISTENING tour was based on a fraudulent premise, but there were a few honest moments in the opening sessions. On the second day of the adventure, she held a "health care listening session" in Cooperstown. Her campaign had made sure that it would not be the news of the day by that morning leaking her first Jew-pander of the campaign: she now considered Jerusalem the eternal and indivisible capital of Israel. But it was still a remarkable session, and not because of any listening that she did. (At this meeting she "learned" that the patients, the nurses, and the doctors at the session were interested in . . . health care!)

Instead she declared that she had joined "the school of smaller steps" since the demise of HillaryCare—and then she described the small steps on the Democratic agenda as woefully inadequate. She averred that she supported the patients' bill of rights—but she called it a "diversion" that would never reform the money-driven insurance industry. She endorsed her husband's plan to expand prescription drug coverage for the elderly—but she insisted that the problem was "much greater than that." Her bold, big-government, market-skeptic rhetoric sounded as out-there as it did in 1994: "I think we've got to rethink the way we insure people in this country." I made a mental note to ask her whether she still thought her grand plan of 1994 made sense.

But this was early campaign-Hillary. The seasoned campaign-Hillary to whom I was assigned the next fall no longer ad-libbed off her party-line Democratic script. Such candor would not have been useful to her. She still had not explained whether she thought that her old health plan was a good idea, for the same reason. She had become an on-message machine: more money for prescription drugs, more money for schools, more concern about the environment and about the right to choose. Her advisers knew that her new state had a "favorable issues landscape" for Democrats, and she became a permanent fixture on that landscape. In fact, in her maiden floor speech the junior senator from New York implored President Bush to "transform the rhetoric of leadership into the reality of accomplishment" by passing, you guessed it, the patients' bill of rights. A diversion, indeed.

Anyway, I was absent for most of what Tomasky describes as Hillary's "journey from cosseted first lady to flesh-and-blood candidate." But I'm not sure what he means by "flesh-and-blood." I never thought that she seemed overly human on the trail. For some reason, she never felt compelled to share that *Flintstones* story with me and the rest of the pack; and by the end she seemed even more scripted and even less real. Were there other differences between the early Hillary—who made excuses for her husband's adultery in *Talk* magazine, flip-flopped over his plan to offer clemency to Puerto Rican terrorists, smooched Suha, and accepted a home loan from the noted mortgage bank of Terry McAuliffe—and the seasoned Hillary? She did seem smoother, more comfortable, more confident. Her campaign was quicker to respond to potentially embarrassing controversies; but I could not detect much else of any significance, and neither could Tomasky.

She certainly did not sound any more honest. Perhaps it is foolish to expect politicians to mean what they say. Perhaps we should take for granted that all candidates seek office out of sheer ambition. Perhaps it is not fair to hold Hillary to higher standards on account of the holier-than-thou politics-of-meaning attitude that she brought to Washington. But let the record reflect that after the disastrous kiss in Ramallah, she claimed that she had misunderstood the translation of Suha's vile speech, even though the reporters on the scene had understood it with no problems. When she was asked why she was ducking the Sunday talk shows, she explained that Sunday was her day to "chill out," even though she was campaigning regularly on Sundays. And when it came out last fall that she had accepted $50,000 in donations from a Muslim group that spewed anti-Israel venom on its website, she remarked that she had never heard of the group, even though she had attended its fund-raiser in her honor, accepted a plaque, and sent the group a thank-you note. "You know," she said later, "I get handed thousands of plaques." (I guess that explanation satisfied the Hasidim in Rockland County. Why else would they have voted for her?) In any case, I watched her proclaim her altruistic motives for running in New York in July 1999, and I watched her call the Syracuse area one of the most beautiful places on earth in October 2000. Based on what I saw and heard, I have no reason to believe the first pronouncement was any more credible than the second.

III.

IT'S NOT AS though Tomasky buys all of Mrs. Clinton's rubbish. "That last statement really seemed to strain credulity," he writes about one whopper. He is aware that her answers are rarely more than "half-answers," that they always seem to raise more questions than

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they put to rest. So why does he cut her so much slack? She won, yes. But you also get the sense that Tomasky truly believes that Hillary's left-wing ends justify her all-wing means, or at least that he truly believes that she believes that. He takes it as a matter of faith that she ran for Senate not because she craved validation after a nationally televised marital humiliation, or because she believed that she was entitled to power and saw an opportunity for political advancement, but because she is a progressive "do-gooder" in the great tradition of the nineteenth century. Perhaps this is true. She certainly was known as the house liberal in the Clinton administration. But Hillary 2000 did not provide much evidence of any real philosophical beliefs beyond the basic Democratic platform. Her only consistent ideology was a faith in political popularity.

Tomasky argues forgivingly that, whatever you think about Hillary's obfuscations and evasions, she at least ran a substantive campaign of ideas: "She honestly believed that campaigns were pure environments for ideas." This is bogus. Hillary 2000 had nothing to do with ideas. In fact, it plagiarized blatantly from Schumer 1998, right down to the pilfered "upstate economic plan" that she is offering as her first bill. Her campaign began and ended with the premise that New York is a heavily Democratic state, particularly in presidential-election years, and that New Yorkers lean especially Democratic about issues such as education, health care, and the environment. Her job was to keep repeating how committed she was to those issues. And to The Children, of course. And how those mean Republicans were not committed to any of these high and fine things. She never offered a single new idea, as far as I noticed. She simply embraced the legacy of her husband, who remained popular in New York, while distancing herself from his administration whenever it suited her: on Israel, on Medicaid formulas, even on dairy policy.

Here's a thought. If, as Tomasky believes that Hillary believes, "campaigns are about issues, period," and if the only issues in this campaign were the ones in the Democratic catechism, then why shouldn't Nita Lowey have read the Democratic script in 2000? Why the Senate? Why New York? Why Hillary? And here's another thought. When Hillary thought that she was running against Giuliani, who was not burdened by a Republican voting record and who agreed with Democrats on many of those supposedly all-important issues, she did not seem to believe so fervently that campaigns were about issues, period. She focused mostly on his nasty temperament.

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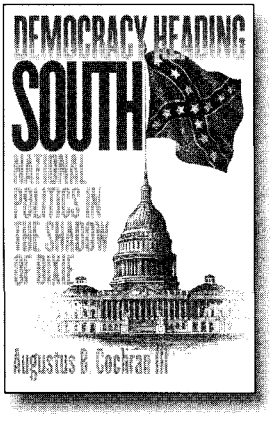

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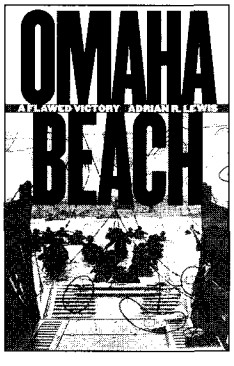

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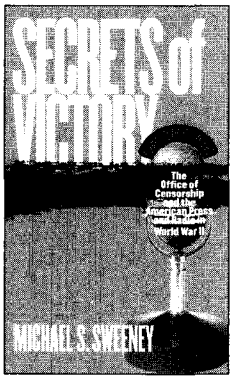

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By the time Lazio stepped into the race, "campaigns are about issues, period" had become thinly disguised Hillaryspeak for "don't ask about my record." She had just spent eight years as the president's most influential adviser, but she refused throughout the campaign to discuss what she had advised him, except on a few occasions when it was useful for her to do so. She also refused to discuss the bye-bye billing records or the lotteryesque commodities windfall or any of the other peculiarities of her career—personal integrity, apparently, is not a legitimate issue. But when Lazio leveled substantive attacks on her failed health care plan, noting that it would have eviscerated New York's teaching hospitals, she would simply reply: "I'm running a campaign of issues, not insults." (This may call to mind another less-than-forthright candidate for high office, whose riposte of choice was "I'm a uniter, not a divider.") When Lazio criticized her education-reform efforts in Arkansas, she would invariably respond: "I'm here to talk about the future, not the past." Needless to say, that did not stop her from distorting Lazio's record in Congress. He is a central-casting New York moderate, but she made him sound like the second coming of Jesse Helms.

Tomasky has a surprising view of Lazio. He believes that the boyish Republican ran a clueless campaign—the original sin, in Tomasky's strategy-focused world. In this instance, Tomasky has a point. Lazio's constant attacks on Hillary stepped on his badly focused message of moderate Republicanism. They also gave her an opportunity to play victim, and her poll ratings always shoot up when she seems like a victim. (How could Mike Murphy, Lazio's highly paid campaign brain, not have known that? Also, do Murphy's candidates ever win, or are they just hapless props in his hype crusade?) But Tomasky then turns this tactical failure into a morality play: the Republican candidate, he says, was untrue to himself, because the true Rick Lazio is a nice guy. And this failure of personal authenticity, Tomasky believes, was Lazio's undoing. Excuse me? There are many lessons to be learned from New York's extraordinary Senate race: about strategy, about journalism, about morality, about overcoming adversity. But the notion that inauthenticity makes for bad politics is emphatically not one of those lessons. Just ask the winner, whoever she is.

HERE IS ANOTHER of my favorite Hillary 2000 memories. It was late October, and she was doing a rally at a strip mall in, of all places, the Clinton section of Rochester. She was talking, of course, about The Issues. There was just one thing about the event that I didn't get. Why wasn't she using the Clinton Family Health Clinic as a backdrop? Surely it could have sent a picture-perfect subliminal message about the Clinton commitment to family health—and also a non-subliminal message, since the Clinton administration helped build the mall with enterprise-zone money. So why was her podium set up in the parking lot? When I inquired about this inexplicable failure of tactical imagination, one of her aides sheepishly pointed out the sign next door to the health clinic. It read: "Rochester Police, Clinton Section." Aha. That was one bit of subliminality that the campaign could do without.

It is a catty story, and it is not scrupulously fair to the candidate. But I wish Tomasky could have been a bit cattier and a bit less scrupulously fair to the candidate. *Hillary's Turn* is a deadly serious book, and Hillary 2000 was a very funny affair. I certainly understand why Mrs. Clinton wanted us to ignore the absurdity. I can even understand why the reporters who had to file daily dispatches usually did ignore it. But why did Tomasky ignore it? The absurdity was the best part, the most interesting part. Who can forget the first lady of the United States getting booed at a pro-Israel rally while she was attacking the president of the United States for being insufficiently pro-Israel? That doesn't happen every day.

Hillary 2000 did not seem like serious

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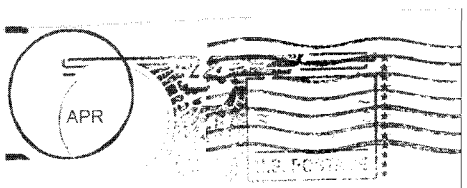

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drama to me; it seemed like surreal farce. There was Hillary's suggestion during a speech at a gay-pride dinner that everyone should vote dressed as their favorite issue: "Now, for some people, that may be prescription drugs. You know, for others it can be sensible gun safety measures, or choice, or the environment. I wouldn't mind seeing a number of trees going to the polls on November 7!" Or her response when someone asked whether her husband—her staff called him the kibbitzer-in-chief, because he constantly called them to yammer about strategy—planned to campaign for her: "We've put in our request for his time. We're competing with people all over the country. I certainly hope he'll come to New York." Or her passionate attack on Lazio for using the USS *Cole* tragedy to score political points, followed an hour later by a speech that used the USS *Cole* tragedy to score political points. Or her exuberant announcement at an upstate college that on the campaign trail, every day was like Dolphi Day. Dolphi Day, you see, is an annual ritual at that school in which all campus rules are basically suspended for a day.

This notion of the campaign trail as a zone in which rules do not apply strikes me as another one of Mrs. Clinton's unintentional contributions to the proper understanding of modern politics. It is breathtaking in its cynicism. But it is not, I suppose, a controversial idea nowadays. Politics is about winning, isn't it? And so it goes without saying that candidates will do or say anything to win. Such is the authority under which modern campaigns are run: the oracle at Dolphi. ■

Sign Language

By G.W. Bowersock

Gesture in Naples and Gesture in Classical Antiquity by Andrea de Jorio translated and with an introduction by Adam Kendon

(Indiana University Press, 517 pp., $49.95)

Near the end of *The Birds*, Aristophanes' comic fantasy, one character, concealing himself under a parasol from the watchful gaze of all-seeing Zeus, asks an interlocutor to take his parasol and to hold it over him so that he can report the latest news. This delicious piece of stage business beautifully demonstrates the fundamental truth that without two free hands an ancient Greek would have been tongue-tied. And the Romans were no different, as we can see from a long discussion by the rhetorician Quintilian in the early empire on how to gesture when speaking to a courtroom. Sometimes the entire body could be manipulated in ways that were no less eloquent than movements of the hands. In fact, the external appearance of the body could be as significant as the way it moved. Philosophers were traditionally grubby, with long and filthy hair, whereas sophists were well-groomed and perfumed.

Non-verbal expression was developed to a high art in antiquity, and it has long been clear to anyone who has traveled in the Mediterranean countries that gestures are as natural and as important there today as they were then. Andrea de Jorio, a canon of the Cathedral of Naples and a curator at the city's Royal Museum in the early decades of the nineteenth century, became convinced that the entire repertoire of gestures that he observed every day in the streets of Naples had survived unaltered from antiquity. This was a bold inference for a city unusually rich in its history as well as its gestural vocabulary. Confronted with the astonishing paintings and sculptures from the recently excavated sites of Herculaneum and Pompeii, as well as the collection of images on southern Italian vases in the Naples museum, de Jorio decided to make a systematic inventory of Neapolitan gestures in the hope of putting forward authoritative interpretations of those ancient scenes. His book was published in 1832,

G.W. Bowersock is a historian of the Greco-Roman world at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton.

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and it enjoyed a legendary reputation in the nineteenth century among those who believed, as de Jorio did not, that gestures constituted a kind of language.

The twentieth century found little time for de Jorio's pioneering work until recently, when the rise of semiotics combined with an interest among art historians in gesture to invest his achievement with an importance that not even he could have imagined. Even so, this book has been more often cited than read. In view of its immense relevance to contemporary studies of gesture in the context of language and culture, it is surprising that we have had to wait so long for a translation into English.

Adam Kendon has now given us the first complete, annotated rendering of *La mimica degli antichi investigata nel gestire napoletano*. Kendon himself is an established leader in the new scientific approach to the study of gesture. He is the author of a work on the sign language of Australian Aborigines, as well as of numerous articles in semiotic and anthropological journals. Although, as he has often remarked, gestural activity has for centuries attracted the attention of travelers, philosophers, and linguists, it has become a serious academic industry only in the last two decades.

Gesture is obviously not the same as speech. It may have a translatable vocabulary, but it certainly lacks syntax. Yet, as Aristophanes shows, in many cultures speech cannot happen without gesture, though gesture can undoubtedly happen without speech. This appears to be nowhere more true than in Naples. Hence the renewal of interest in a work published two centuries ago, a work that could easily be called ponderous were it not for the astonishing revelations that it provides. In a drab and clinical style worthy of Masters and Johnson, it describes a world of pullulating impropriety.

De Jorio came from a leading family of the island of Procida in the Bay of Naples. He aspired from childhood to a life in the church, and, no doubt with help from family contacts, he became canon at the tender age of thirty-six. A farmer's accidental discovery of an ancient tomb near Cumae, in the area of Pozzuoli, led to de Jorio's being called in to prevent pillaging, and the bas-reliefs that were found there ignited a passion for antiquities that consumed the cleric for the rest of his life. In trying to explain the meaning of dancing figures on the reliefs, de Jorio began a gradual transformation into an archaeologist and a gesture analyst.

De Jorio immersed himself in the volumes of the Herculaneum Academy, where much of the material from the excavations in the previous century had been published with learned commentary. He occupied himself with writing guidebooks for visitors to the Royal Museum. As time passed, he concentrated more and more on the gestures that he observed in the ancient works of art. As a trained classical scholar, de Jorio already had a good knowledge of the ancient texts, which he undertook to mine for references to gestures. Fortified with all this erudition, de Jorio set about his great task of cataloguing what he observed in the Naples of his own day.

His presumption that Neapolitan gestures were a survival of classical ones was no more than a hypothesis. Despite his optimism, de Jorio was never able to prove it. Besides, his knowledge of Latin was considerably more profound than his knowledge of Greek, and it is disconcerting to see him ignore so much important Greek evidence (including that episode in *The Birds*). Yet the enterprise was both audacious and original. More than a century and a half later, the book is a sheer delight to read. Kendon's translation is not elegant, but it is serviceable, which is what he intended it to be. It must be said that occasionally he falters in his mother tongue ("foreigners are always asking we Neapolitans"), and the proofreading of texts quoted in Latin has been very badly done. Any reader keen enough to examine the passages cited in Kendon's notes would be well advised to consult an edition of the original. The references at least are invariably correct.

De Jorio is not a theorist of gesture. He is an observer and an interpreter. In his introductory pages he comments wryly on the reaction of visitors from the buttoned-up cultures to the north. In the Naples museum, which was a part of the Grand Tour, he had many an occasion to offer explanations of the gestures depicted on ancient vases "in the same way as we would explain our own." Still, says de Jorio, "to those who had been born in distant regions and who, on account of their cool and sluggish temperament are rather unsuited to gesturing, these explanations seemed cold and without meaning."

To instruct such souls, de Jorio prepared his elaborate account of gestures as he saw and understood them in Naples. His book is nothing less than an encyclopedia of gestures, with comprehensive headings organized alphabetically beginning with *abbracciare* ("embrace"). Kendon has wisely retained the Italian original at the start of each entry, so that the movement from one cluster of gestures to another is exactly as de Jorio created it. After *abbracciare* comes *additare* ("pointing, indicating"), and onward through such delights as *bacio* ("kiss"), *dormire* ("sleep"), *grattarsi* ("scratching oneself"), *mano in fianco* ("hands on hips"), and *schiopetto* ("snapping the fingers"). The entry titled *perfetto* ("perfect") announces gravely that it is not a treatise on metaphysics but merely a complement to the earlier discussion of *giusto* ("just").

De Jorio commissioned a local artist named Gaetano Gigante, who specialized in Neapolitan scenes for the tourist market, to create a series of images that were, in de Jorio's opinion, more life-like and more reliable than those snapped up by the foreigners. These images, charmingly called *bambocciate* (from a word for simpleton that is meant to evoke the life of plain folk), became an integral part of de Jorio's book. He equipped them with explanatory commentary and placed them alongside a few ancient images on which he offered comment. He added to these some famous drawings of hands performing various gestures (some untranslatable into polite language), and of heads with hands at various positions. These images have been, until now, the best-known part of de Jorio's work.

It is difficult to know what a gesture is. Kendon insists that a bodily expression must be willful to count as a gesture, although he acknowledges that gesture is a concept "with fuzzy boundaries." Involuntary reactions, such as laughing, crying, or blushing, are not to be taken as gestures unless they are feigned, and yet we all know that in the Mediterranean world many a recognizable gesture occurs as involuntarily as a laugh or a blush. When today's Greek silently answers a question in the negative, he does not shake his head from side to side, as we do; he tips his head back, sometimes with a concomitant closing of the eyelids. This was an act already known to Homer and familiar to Athenians in the age of Pericles. The Greek verb is *ananeuein*, "to tip one's head upward." De Jorio duly lists this act under the heading of *negativo*, and he characteristically provides Latin parallels (though no Greek ones). But he does not inquire—nor does Kendon, for that matter—whether this act is willful in the same sense that holding out the index and little fingers of the hand certainly is, in one of the most potent and menacing of gestures (*fare le corna*, or "horns").

De Jorio is simply interested in documenting what he notices people doing with their hands and bodies. He is persuaded that archaeological scholarship will benefit; and he declares, in Kendon's less than felicitous prose, that "among the

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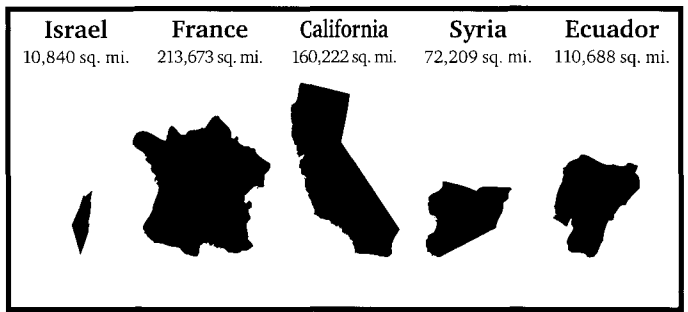

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It is clear that the concept of "Greater Israel," lacks any validity and has no basis in fact. To apply such a concept to a country as small as Israel would almost seem a mockery. Obviously, Israel has no territorial ambitions. All it wants is to live in peace within secure and defensible borders, just as any other country and as required under U.N. Resolution No. 242. But it seems that the *size* of Israel, whether "greater" or "lesser" is not at all the concern of Israel's implacable Arab enemies. The very *existence* of Israel, of a Jewish state in their midst of whatever size, is unacceptable to the Arabs. And unless that mindset changes, not until the Arab states have become democracies and have come to full acceptance of Israel, are willing to make *true* peace with it, and are prepared to establish normal and friendly relations with Israel can any possible territorial adjustment be considered. As it looks right now, that may still take some time.

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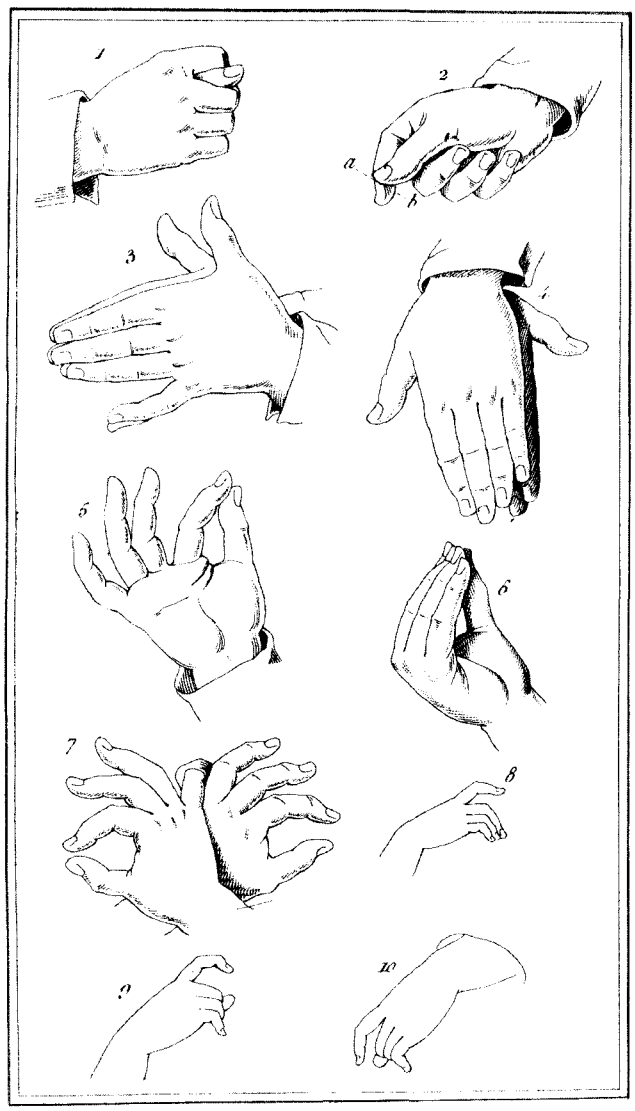
objectives of this work, then, one of the main ones has been to prepare for archaeologists new methods for the understanding of antiquity." Yet he is well aware that eighteenth-century and early-nineteenth-century archaeology, which delivered those paintings and sculptures that first captivated him, had to concern itself with gross obscenity. Representations of copulation of various kinds, fellatio, cunnilingus, bestiality, and the gestures that accompany such lubricious conduct all fell squarely within de Jorio's investigation.

Some of the gestures on which he finds it necessary to dilate at length involve configurations of the fingers that would be readily understood—and resented—on the streets of any American city today. (We need hardly assume that this gestural lingua franca was imported by immigrants from Naples.) This obviously posed a terrible problem for the canon of a cathedral. What de Jorio called "obscene signs" he acknowledged to be a stumbling block, "particularly for us." In a work intended only for the eyes of professional scholars, anything could be said—and indeed was said, as in the volumes of the Herculaneum Academy. De Jorio realized that he could have chosen to omit offensive material, but he decided otherwise. As he rightly asked: "How would it be possible to cite the ancients in support of our discoveries, especially their monuments, if four-fifths of them are felt as an affront to delicacy?"

And so, in a remarkable effort of self-abnegation, de Jorio announced that he would always use "the necessary discretion in expression and modesty in words," but invoke from the rich store of Neapolitan gestures those that every reader would know to be obscene in order to explain the ancient gestures. Hence, says de Jorio with evident satisfaction, "with such an innocent expedient, that which was not decent was successfully concealed." How he imagined that ignorant northerners of sluggish temperament would be helped by this ruse is not immediately apparent.

In handling obscene texts, as opposed to obscene images, de Jorio undertook for the edification of archaeologists to provide cross-references that would illuminate the indelicate parts of his inquiry without actually spelling out what was going on. In some cases, he compels a serious reader to make an extensive romp through the sources in order to find out what a given gesture is really about. The reader who embarks upon his apparently inoffensive rubric of *salutare* ("greeting") begins with an undoubtedly benign gesture solemnly described as "palm of the hand raised towards the face and oscillated in the direction of the interlocutor." De Jorio knows that in northern Europe this indicates a summons but in the south indicates "welcome" or "goodbye." He moves on to other gestures of greeting.



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1. Mano in fica ("fig") 2. Danaro (money)
3. and 4. Stupido (stupid)
5. Amore (love) 6. Bacio (kiss)
7. Condotta versipelle (dissembling conduct)
8. Schiopetto (snapping the fingers)
9. and 10. Disprezzo (scorn)

But he has to cope with antiquity. Since he know his Petronius well, he can invoke a funny moment when Lichas (whom he erroneously calls Lycas) greets the rogue hero Encolpius: "Lycas politely moved his hand and said, 'Greetings, Encolpius.'" About this, de Jorio coyly remarks: "We will say with some certainty that he makes one of the gestures of salutation that we have described. However, the question is: Which one? Who can know?" In fact, de Jorio knew perfectly well, as anyone who follows up his "cross-reference" will quickly discover. What Petronius says in the full text, of which de Jorio cites only part, is that Lichas took one look at Encolpius's genitals, politely put his hand there, and said, "Greetings, Encolpius."

There are many instances of cloistered humor of this kind, in which de Jorio seems to wink at readers in the know, and one cannot help wondering whether these juicy little items, both visual and textual, did not provide an impetus for his sociological research. On the extended middle finger, which the ancients already recognized as unchaste (*impudicus*), de Jorio allows himself more of those rhetorical questions that invariably show him on the borders of decency. Yet he summons up the pertinent texts in Persius and Martial for those who care to consult them, and presumably he also counts on those who already know what this very common gesture means.

Likewise, in his treatment of a comparably infamous configuration of the hand, de Jorio is overtly reticent but covertly revealing. This is the *fica*, or *mano in fica*, or "fig," of which there is an uncompromising representation in one of the plates of hand gestures. It is explicitly described as "hand as a fist with the point of the thumb interposed between the middle finger and the index finger so that it sticks out." We are then given a variety of interpretations of this ugly gesture: apotropaic, insulting, inviting (for obscene purposes). De Jorio expatiates most implausibly on some ancient paintings in which he detects the "fig." Although women figure in those images, de Jorio is betrayed by his lack of Greek. If he had known his Aristophanes, he would surely have added a "cross-reference" to line 1,350 of *Peace*, where it is clear that the word for "fig" (*sukon*) stands for the female genitals. Thanks to Kendon's note, the reader will at least discover that the Italian *fica*, a very rude word, "is defined as a vulgar term for 'vulva' and, by extension, a vulgar term for 'woman.'" Proper

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Italian for "fig" is *fico*, not *fica*.

Fans of Fellini's *Satyricon* will be pleased to find in these pages an explanation of that grotesque actor in the opening sequence who farts onstage. He is named Vernacchio, and, in the words of the screenplay, "emits a rapid and quasi-musical series of farts." In a lengthy account of gestures for derision or ridicule (*beffeggiare*), de Jorio describes a gesture called *vernacchio*, in which a farting sound is produced through the application of the hand to the mouth when filled with air. "Such behavior is so insulting," declares de Jorio, "that it is scarcely used in Naples except by those who belong to the lowest classes of the population." Whether the *vernacchio* was known to Augustus's Rome as well as to Fellini's Rome is not clear, but de Jorio thinks that it was, and he bases his view on a text of Horace, which he characteristically invokes with a rhetorical question and an incomplete citation.

POOR DE JORIO! He is so often let down when he tries to relate his Neapolitans to the ancients. The primary justification for his work is flawed at best. Certain gestures, such as tipping the head upward or raising the middle finger, do indeed appear to have survived through the ages, as if they represent some kind of fundamental repertory of gesture peculiar to the human animal. But much of what de Jorio records is only marginally relevant to antiquity, and as a result his own interpretations of ancient images are far less compelling than his interpretations of the contemporary scenes, the *bambocciate*, that he commissioned.

Two of his case studies will be sufficient to illustrate the poverty of de Jorio's method. He attempts to explain a famous image of a nude dancing woman, seen from behind, as known to him from the publications of the Herculaneum Academy. He quotes from the learned commentary of the academicians while censoring the more indelicate of their citations. The woman seems quite obviously to be dancing, as the academicians claimed; but de Jorio is much taken by the exposure of her buttocks to the viewer and the open circle created by the thumb and forefinger of the left hand that she holds over her head. The canon of Naples Cathedral wishes us to believe that this is an erotic invitation (or insult), issued by the display of the backside (a form of mooning, it seems) and the representation of the female genitals by the fingers of the left hand. Of course he cannot say this outright, but he refers the reader to his detailed description of the gesture under his rubric *disprezzo*, or "scorn."

For a second example of de Jorio's misguided method of interpreting the ancients, consider his Plate XVIII, a drawing of a vase painting. The drawing is defective in its transcription of two of the four Greek words, but never mind. There are four figures, from left to right: a female called Euodia ("Sweet Smell") gesturing to the right; a seated satyr named Komos ("Revelry") facing right and playing long pipes; a female called Galene ("Relaxation") facing left and holding a tambourine; and finally at right the figure of Dionysus facing left, looking at the two women with the satyr between them. We hardly need a hierophant to tell us that this is a Dionysiac scene, with music and revelry. For de Jorio, however, this is a picture of a quarrel, because the two women are looking at each other and the one on the left is pointing a finger at the other. "It seems natural and clear," he writes, "that the first woman is reproaching the other woman with something, and that the other is surprised about this and she also denies it." As for the musical satyr between the two women: "This is because in such scenes the person playing this sort of role [of the jealous woman] usually does it from behind someone." De Jorio assures his reader that a true Neapolitan would have grasped all this the moment he saw the picture.

It is sad to find such nonsense in the pages of a work that the author compiled so meticulously and so lovingly. In truth, the book is almost useless for the archaeologists and the art historians whom de Jorio thought it would benefit. And yet he opened up the systematic study of gesture in ways that he could never anticipate, for generations long after him. This is a great work built on a false premise, which is finally a far better thing than a poor work built on a sound premise. It would have helped if de Jorio had been able to cast his net far wider than the streets of Naples and the collections of the Royal Museum. But all its silliness notwithstanding, the book commands respect.

After reading de Jorio's book, no one will ever again be able to read Clement Moore's immortal verses on St. Nicholas in quite the same way: "He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,/And fill'd all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,/And laying his finger aside of his nose,/And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose." The tomb of St. Nicholas can be seen today at Myra in southwestern Turkey, and so his gestures ought perhaps to have fallen within the classical purview of de Jorio. But Moore's St. Nicholas is Santa Claus, and he comes from those northern climes where de Jorio thought that temperaments were naturally sluggish. What a mistake! We need a de Jorio of the North Pole. ■

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Righteous

I HAVE LEARNED FROM A FRIEND about the pitfall of moral exquisiteness. By moral exquisiteness, I mean the sort of moral reasoning that has become so refined, so attentive to every aspect of every case, so sensitive to every standpoint in every situation, that all moral friction is dispelled, and every moral question is settled, and the individual is left with a pleasing sensation of his own clarity, his own rectitude. A diligent conscience can be also complacent; it can be complacent about its diligence. Professors of moral philosophy sometimes offend me in this way, when they seem like virtuosos of virtue. But the disappointing friend of whom I am speaking is not a professor of moral philosophy. He is, in fact, a moral hero. And now he has baffled me with an exercise in moral casuistry about an evil that requires nothing fancy for its proper understanding, an evil that is so shocking precisely because it is so simple.

THE EVIL TO WHICH I REFER IS THE fevered murder of the Jews of Jedwabne by the Poles of Jedwabne on July 10, 1941. With the appearance of Jan T. Gross's crushing book *Neighbors*, this obscenity has been rescued from oblivion, not least in Poland, where oblivion suited many people just fine. (See "The Murder of Memory," by Jaroslaw Anders, on page 36.) *The New York Times* asked Adam Michnik for his thoughts about the crime in Jedwabne, and about the tender subject of Poles and Jews. He obliged, alas. "As I write this text," he explained in his piece, "I am weighing words carefully." Oh, how carefully! A howl would have done quite well. Instead my friend has produced a contorted moral calculation that is more a document of the problem than a discussion of the problem.

THERE ARE THE USUAL POLISH APOLOgetics. Michnik begins by reminding his readers that the Poles were also victims: "Not a single Polish family was spared by Hitler and Stalin." (Gross efficiently retires this line of argument in a chapter called "Is It Possible to Be Simultaneously a Victim and a Victimizer?") And Michnik repairs also to the Poles who rescued Jews during the war. He cites the forest of Polish trees at the Avenue of the Righteous Gentiles at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, as if a stroll along that shattering lane should lighten anybody's load. "Do the murderers deserve more recognition than the righteous?" Michnik asks. Well, yes, they do, because there were many more of them. (I write this as the grateful son of a Jewish woman who was saved by Poles.) The mention of the righteous is a way of changing the subject, if the subject is the unrighteous. It is designed to leave no guilt uncomplicated, no shame unqualified, no sorrow unalloyed.

MICHNIK'S EXAMPLE OF POLISH DEcency toward the Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland is grotesque. He cites an appeal by a well-known Polish writer in August 1942. "The dying Jews are surrounded by Pilates washing their hands," she stirringly wrote. "This silence cannot be tolerated any longer." And she continued: "Our feelings toward the Jews haven't changed. We still consider them the political, economic, and ideological enemies of Poland.... [But] the knowledge of these feelings doesn't relieve us of the duty of condemning the crime. We don't want to be Pilates." This "extraordinary appeal," Michnik explains, "illustrates the paradox of Polish attitudes toward the Jews. The anti-Semitic tradition compels the Poles to perceive the Jews as aliens while the Polish heroic tradition compels them to save them." But I do not see a paradox in this writer's language. I see a poison in it, and a piety that lives very comfortably with a poison. The Poles were not Pilates, because the Jews were not Jesus, though they were suffering also from the cross. If these were the philosophical and emotional grounds for "Polish heroism" on behalf of the Jews in Poland, it is no wonder that such heroism was rare.

"I DON'T BELIEVE IN COLLECTIVE guilt or collective responsibility or any other responsibility except the moral one," Michnik continues. "And therefore I ponder what exactly is my individual responsibility and my own guilt." This is the voice of an ethically scrupulous man. But then things go awry. "Certainly I cannot be responsible for that crowd of murderers who set the barn in Jedwabne on fire." Certainly; but it is a little demagogic to suggest that anybody is imputing such responsibility to him, or to any other person who was not in Jedwabne on that day of hell. "When I hear a call to admit my Polish guilt, I feel hurt the same way the citizens of Jedwabne feel when they are interrogated by reporters from around the world." There is a strange nativist quality to that last phrase; but it is my friend's hurt feelings that disturb me. I think that they require a closer look at the notion of collective responsibility.

IT IS NOT TRUE THAT THE MORAL life is lived only individually, even if acts of good or evil are the work of individuals acting together or alone. Individuals belong to groups, and it is a cost or a benefit of their belonging that they are morally implicated by their groups, which are moral agents, too. One can oppose the misdeeds of one's group, but one cannot secede from it, I mean not neatly after the fact. For this reason, I am not hurt when I am interrogated about the misdeeds of Jews or the misdeeds of Americans, because I have chosen to be known as a Jew and as an American. I understand why they are coming to me with their questions, even with their slanders. I accept that I have some explaining (or refuting or apologizing) to do. To be sure, I am not just a member of my groups, I am also an individual whom they cannot entirely reach or entirely rule; but I cannot hide behind the fact of my individuation, behind the doctrine of individual responsibility, when the going gets rough. Indeed, I could not permit myself to feel pride about the accomplishments of my people and my country if I did not require myself to feel shame about the perfidies of my people and my country. If those perfidies were not the work of my own hands, neither were those accomplishments.

I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT MICHNIK would disagree with what I have just written. And so I am puzzled by the haggling tone of his reckoning with Jedwabne. He appears to have experienced a contradiction, to have needed to experience a contradiction, where there should be no contradiction. "Writing these words, I feel a specific schizophrenia: I am a Pole and my shame about the Jedwabne murder is a Polish shame. At the same time, I know that if I had been there in Jedwabne, I would have been killed as a Jew." But this is not a schizophrenia at all. Hybridity, a common fate, is not always morally rending. The multiple identity that Michnik describes means only that he has multiple reasons for anger, for tears, for the repudiation of every excuse and every extenuation. As a Pole and as a Jew, he should have come to the same obvious conclusion: that Poland has many glories, but its history with the Jews is not one of them; and that the interest in innocence always stands in the way of the interest in goodness.

LEON WIESELTIER

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"I just want my child to have a good education."

By Eulanda Johnson, shown with daughter Ebony

I care about my child's education. I would do anything, whatever it takes, to get her the best education possible.

Ebony is a very bright child. I'm not saying that just because she's my child. I know she will grow up to be somebody very special.

So when I found out she wasn't doing well in her social studies and math, I knew I had to do something. I was going to find a school that would help her do her best.

Parental school choice is widespread — unless you're poor.

I wanted to send her to a private school but I could never afford it. If you try to send your children to private school, you will have to work two or three jobs to do it, and then you won't have any time for your kids. That's why the Cleveland Scholarship Program is very important to me.

When I got the letter saying she got a voucher, I was so happy I didn't know what to do. It was like someone was coming to my rescue. This is the best thing that ever happened to my child.

Now that Ebony is at St. Mary's, she is on the right track. The teacher works with me. She sends home notes to let me know how Ebony is doing. It's up to the teacher and the parent to work together.

The teacher called me at home to let me know I had a talkative child. She had called before to tell me Ebony had problems with multiplication tables and asked me to work with her with flash cards.

The teacher even called me back to tell me Ebony is doing much better. Her math has improved. She's not talking too much. I even got a note at home telling me how her grades were looking. I want to know so we can work together to get those grades up.

I just want my child to have a good education. I don't think that's asking for too much.

Nine-year old Ebony Johnson is one of 3,908 children from low-income families participating in the Cleveland Scholarship and Tutoring Program.

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